BT 1100
.B97 W5

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
1800

Class BT 1100
Book B97W5

PRESENTED BY

ALBANY P. L. S.
921 KAINS AVE.
ALBANY, CALIF.

THE

ANALOGY OF RELIGION,

Natural and Revealed,

2285
4351

TO THE

CONSTITUTION AND COURSE OF NATURE:

CONSISTING OF

A Criticism of Butler's Treatise on the Subject,

TOGETHER WITH

A VIEW OF THE CONNEXION OF THE ARGUMENTS OF THE ANALOGY WITH THE OTHER MAIN BRANCHES OF THE EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY NOT NOTICED IN BUTLER'S WORK.

BY DANIEL WILSON, D. D.
BISHOP OF CALCUTTA.

BOSTON:
JAMES LORING, 132 WASHINGTON STREET.

1834.

BT1100
.B97W5

Gift
Bertram Smith
Sept. 9, 1933

Save Newspapers and Magazines for the Y.
Call Thorn. 2949 Library Books Needed. Thanks.

ANALOGY OF RELIGION,

Natural and Revealed.

SKETCH OF THE DESIGN OF BISHOP BUTLER'S ANALOGY.

Bishop Butler is one of those creative geniuses, who give a character to their times. His great work, 'The Analogy of Religion,' has fixed the admiration of all competent judges for nearly a century, and will continue to be studied so long as the language in which he wrote endures. The mind of a master pervades it. The author chose a theme infinitely important, and he has treated it with a skill, a force, a novelty and talent, which have left little for others to do after him. He opened the mine and exhausted it himself. A discretion which never oversteps the line of prudence, is in him united with a penetra-

tion which nothing can escape. There is in his writings a vastness of idea, a reach and generalization of reasoning, a native simplicity and grandeur of thought, which command and fill the mind. At the same time, his illustrations are so striking and familiar as to instruct as well as persuade. Nothing is violent, nothing far-fetched, nothing pushed beyond its fair limits, nothing fanciful or weak: a masculine power of argument runs through the whole. All bespeaks that repose of mind, that tranquility which springs from a superior understanding, and an intimate acquaintance with every part of his subject. He grasps firmly his topic, and insensibly communicates to his reader the calmness and conviction which he possesses himself. He embraces with equal ease the greatest and the smallest points connected with his argument. He often throws out as he goes along, some general principle which seems to cost him no labour, and yet which opens a whole field of contemplation before the view of the reader.

Butler was a philosopher in the true sense of the term. He searches for wisdom wher-

ever he can discern its traces. He puts forth the keenest sagacity in his pursuit of his great object, and never turns aside till he reaches, and seizes it. Patient, silent, unobtrusive investigation was his forte. His powers of invention were as fruitful as his judgment was sound. Probably no book in the compass of theology is so full of the seeds of things, to use the expression of a kindred genius, (Lord Bacon) as the 'Analogy.'

He was a man raised up for the age in which he lived. The wits and infidels of the reign of our Second Charles, (Butler was born in the year 1692,) had deluged the land with the most unfair, and yet plausible writings against Christianity. A certain fearlessness as to religion seemed to prevail. There was a general decay of piety and zeal. Many persons treated Christianity as if it were an agreed point amongst all people of discernment, that it had been found out to be fictitious. The method taken by these enemies of Christianity, was to magnify and urge objections more or less plausible, against particular doctrines or precepts, which were represented as forming a part of it; and

which, to a thoughtless mind, were easily made to appear extravagant, incredible, and irrational. They professed to admit the Being and Attributes of the Almighty; but they maintained that human reason was sufficient for the discovery and establishment of this fundamental truth, as well as for the development of those moral precepts, by which the conduct of life should be regulated; and they boldly asserted, that so many objections and difficulties might be urged against Christianity, as to exclude it from being admitted as Divine, by any thoughtful and enlightened person.

These assertions Butler undertook to refute. He was a man formed for such a task. He knew thoroughly what he was about. He had a mind to weigh objections, and to trace, detect, and silence cavils. Accordingly, he came forward in all the self-possession, and dignity, and meekness of truth, to meet the infidel on his own ground. He takes the admission of the unbeliever, that God is the Creator and Ruler of the natural world, as a principle conceded. From this point he sets forward, and pursues a course of argument

so cautious, so solid, so forcible; and yet so diversified, so original, so convincing; as to carry along with him, almost insensibly, those who have once put themselves under his guidance. His insight into the constitution and course of nature is almost intuitive; and the application of his knowledge is so surprisingly skilful and forcible, as to silence or to satisfy every fair antagonist. He traces out every objection with a deliberation which nothing can disturb; and shows the fallacies from whence they spring, with a precision and acuteness which overwhelm and charm the reader.

Accordingly, students of all descriptions have long united in the praise of Butler. He is amongst the few classic authors of the first rank in modern literature. He takes his place with Bacon, and Pascal, and Newton, those mighty geniuses who opened new sources of information on the most important subjects, and commanded the love and gratitude of mankind. If his powers were not fully equal to those of these most extraordinary men, they were only second to them. He was in his own line, nearly what they were

in the inventions of science, and the adaptation of mathematics to philosophy founded on experiment. He was of like powers of mind, of similar calm and penetrating sagacity, of the same patience and perseverance in pursuit, of kindred acuteness and precision in argument, of like force and power in his conclusions. His objects were as great, his mind as simple, his perception of truth as distinct, his comprehension of intellect nearly as vast, his aim as elevated, his success as surprising.

The 'Analogy' was the work of Butler's life. As early as the year 1713, when he was a student of Divinity at Tewkesbury, and only twenty-one years of age, his powers of mind were already directed to this and kindred subjects. The sagacity and depth of thought displayed in his letters to Dr. S. Clarke, in that year, attracted, though sent anonymously, the Doctor's particular notice, and brought on a friendly but most acute discussion, which has been annexed to all the subsequent editions of Dr. Clarke's 'Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God.' From the year 1718, when he was appointed

preacher at the Roll's Chapel, to the year 1726, when he published his Fifteen Sermons, the subject of the 'Analogy' was apparently uppermost in his mind. This volume contained in fact the germ of his great work. At length, in the year 1736, when he had attained the age of 45, the 'Analogy' appeared, as the result of his maturest reflections during a series of theological studies of between twenty and thirty years. In all his subsequent writings, after his elevation to the Episcopal Bench in 1738, till his death in 1752, the like train of thought is observable; and even in the last of them, his charge to the clergy of the diocese of Durham in 1751, the one commanding subject which had occupied his life is still pursued. Thus a long course of forty years was devoted by this surprising man, with a depth of knowledge and a strength of mind which were exactly suited to so great a theme, to the illustration of the truth of Christianity from the course and order of God's natural providence.

The consequence is, nothing has ever been advanced against his main argument. The

infidel has never ventured a reply.* It has long been in every one's hands; and is one of the few works which go into the elements of every well-directed plan of education.

It has, however, been generally admitted, that his argument, clear and convincing as it is to a prepared mind, is not obvious in all its parts to the young reader, whose experience of life being small, and his habits of reflection feeble, has not always the furniture necessary for comprehending at first the thoughts and conclusions of such a mind.

* An attempt was made, fifteen years after his death, to fix the charge of superstition on Bishop Butler. It was even insinuated that he died in the communion of the Church of Rome. These calumnies had no foundation. They were refuted at the time by his friend Archbishop Secker, to the satisfaction of every one. And when the accusation and the reply to it were recorded in Butler's life in the Biographia Britannica, by Dr. Kippis, Bishop Halifax took occasion to sift the matter again to the bottom, and published the result in his edition of the 'Analogy,' in 1787. This set the question completely at rest. The decided opposition of Bishop Butler's sentiments to the errors and corruption of the Church of Rome, is indeed apparent in all his writings; and it is now not worth while, in fact it would be obviously unjust, to enter into the details of so wretched a misrepresentation. This subject is very properly omitted altogether in the Oxford University edition of 1807; nor would it have been alluded to here, if the charge against Bishop Butler as well as its answer, had not been revived since, in an article of a widely circulated work, La Biographie Universelle.

The difficulty is increased by a style not always clear and accurate. His language, indeed, interests and delights those who are accustomed to his manner, and seems to have flowed from him without art or contrivance. The familiar expressions and illustrations which continually occur, are not without their charm. Even the colloquial turn of some of the phrases sits well upon the author. Still, as a whole, the style is too close, too negligent, too obscure to be suitable for the young. It is marked with that carelessness into which many writers of the first-rate talents fall, when intent only on their great theme, they pour out their thoughts in the words which first present themselves. More than one attempt has therefore been made to aid the inexperienced reader, by short analyses of Butler's argument. That prefixed by Bishop Halifax to his edition of 1787, is the most valuable, as it is the best known. In the following Essay a more detailed review, or summary, of the work, is attempted, with a similar design: with what success must be left to the judgment of the public. If it aids in forming some idea of the general reasoning

of the Work, it will accomplish all that was designed. It cannot, indeed; for nothing can give a just impression of Butler, but Butler himself. It is not intended to supersede the mighty master, whom it only introduces.

But besides the obscurity which is found in 'The Analogy' by the youthful student, it has been also remarked, that Bishop Butler's statements of Christianity itself, from whatever cause, are somewhat restricted. The impression is cold. The consolation and life of it are absent. Whether this arises from the nature of his argument, and the class of opponents whom he addressed, or from the turn of the Bishop's mind to retired and contemplative, rather than vivid and popular, descriptions of truth; or from something of the languor so generally complained of in the Divinity of the era when he wrote, it is not easy to say. Certain it is that there seems some ground for the complaint. The full and exuberant grace and consolation of Christianity in its particular doctrines, and its application to the heart and life, were not, indeed, the topics of our great author; but the references which frequently occur to the

scheme and end of revelation, would undoubtedly have admitted of some observations on these important points, which may now be thought wanting. Will we be forgiven, if we suggest, in the proper place, what we intend by this remark more at length? The eminent station which Butler holds, makes it natural that we should offer without fear, after an interval of nearly a century, such reflections as honestly occur to us. A Classic may always be commented upon.

In the following pages, therefore, it will be our design—

I. To state the general argument which Bishop Butler pursues in the Analogy; and to review the principal steps of his reasoning.

II. To point out the connexion of the argument of the Analogy, with the other main branches of the Evidences of Christianity; to notice its use and importance; and to offer some remarks on Butler's particular view of Christianity itself, and on the adaptation of his argument to practical religion in all its extent. Each of these divisions will necessarily draw us into some length.

We begin with A STATEMENT OF THE GENERAL ARGUMENT OF THE ANALOGY.

The chief design of this great work is to answer objections raised against Religion, Natural and Revealed, and to confirm the proof of it, by considering the analogy or likeness which that system of religion bears to the constitution and course of the world as ruled by God's ordinary Providence. It compares the known state and progress of things in the natural world, with what religion teaches as to the moral world; the acknowledged dispensations of Providence, with the appointments of religion; that government of God which we actually find ourselves under here, with that government of God which religion binds us to believe and expect hereafter. And it shows that these two schemes are in many, very many respects alike, that they are both vast and incomprehensible as to their whole compass and extent, but that still they may both be traced up to the same general laws, and resolved into the same principles of divine conduct. It takes for granted that there is an Intelligent Governor of the world, a supreme and perfect Author of nature; and

then argues from that part of his works and dispensations which is known and acknowledged, to that part which is denied or objected to; from the world of nature to the world of revelation; from the confessed order of Providence to the disputed appointments of Grace; from creation to Christianity. Its proper design is not to prove the truth of natural and revealed religion by their direct evidences of miracles and prophecies. The author of the Analogy takes other ground. He supposes all these usual proofs to remain, and remain in all their force; and he attempts to confirm them in the minds of considerate men, who may have been staggered by objections and difficulties, by taking up the objector on his own admission of the supreme rule of the Almighty in the world, and showing him that his objections have no real weight, because they might be raised against the works of God in his ordinary and confessed government of the kingdom of nature, just as plausibly as against the government of the same God in the kingdom of religion. This is his line of argument. He reasons from that part of the divine proceedings which comes under

our view in the daily business of life, to that larger and more comprehensive part of these proceedings which is beyond our view, and which religion reveals. Thus he answers and silences objections. God's ordering of the affairs of men by his Providence is a fact known and admitted, and present before our eyes. Now if it can be shown that God's ordering the conduct of men by the laws and motives of religion is analogous to this, and liable to no more nor other objections, then we have a probable argument, in the first instance, and independently of its direct evidences, in favour of the truth of Christianity. Thus objections are satisfactorily silenced, if not removed. The acknowledgment of a perfect Creator and Ruler of the Universe, connected with the fact that he does such and such things, acts by such and such general laws, brings about such and such effects, attaches such and such consequences to men's actions, deals with them in such and such a manner in the daily and hourly appointments of his Providence, gives us data to proceed upon in answering what is objected against the supposed rule of the same God in religion.

If men, indeed, will indulge in vain and idle speculations, and form imaginary models of an universe, and lay down plans for ruling the world in a way which they suppose better than it is at present, there can be no arguing with them. They profess themselves to be wiser than God. They take up with airy notions which have no foundation in facts. This is to deny the natural government of God, which was conceded by the hypothesis. But if men will leave these presumptuous conjectures, and come to facts—to the constitution of nature, as it is actually made known to us by experience, and as confessedly framed by an all-wise and gracious Governor, they will find a surprising analogy between Nature and Religion; they will find the probability weigh down strongly on the side of the truth of Christianity, even prior to its direct proofs and evidences; they will find, that the system of Christianity is loaded with no greater difficulties than the system of nature is, and that it is no safer to spurn at the scheme of religion, than to ridicule the constitution of the same infinitely glorious God, in his temporal government of mankind.

In short, our author shows, that the dispensations of Providence, which we are under now, as inhabitants of this lower world, and as having a momentary interest to secure in it, are analagous to, and, in fact, of a piece with, that further dispensation which relates to us as designed for another world, in which we have an eternal interest. The natural and moral world are thus seen to be intimately connected together, and to be parts of one stupendous whole, where our ignorance betrays us the instant we dare to speculate and imagine things of ourselves, but where common sense and common prudence lead us on securely, if we are modest, and practical, and sincere. And the chief objections which are urged against religion, are thus shown to be false and frivolous; because they might have been equally urged before experience had taught us, against the course and constitution of nature, which are admitted on all hands to have come from the ever-blessed God. If, therefore, they are inconclusive when raised against the external and obvious, and, as it were, tangible order of things around us, much more are they inconclusive,

when raised against the moral, and invisible, and mysterious order of things which Christianity reveals.

It is true, this whole argument from analogy is only a probable one. It does not amount to demonstration. But then, it is a probable argument of the highest kind, and far stronger than those by which men are every day guided in their most important concerns. There are very few things indeed for which we have, or can have, demonstrative evidence. For such feeble creatures as we are, *probability is the guide of life.* Every thing turns upon it. Even a single, slight, presumption may not be without its weight; but presumptions, however slight in themselves, if frequently repeated, often amount to a moral certainty. Thus, if we accidentally observe for one day the ebb and flow of the tide, the observation affords only some sort of presumption, and that perhaps the lowest imaginable, that the same may happen again to-morrow; but the observation of this event for so many days, and months, and ages together, as it has been observed by men in all places and countries, gives us a

full assurance that it will happen to-morrow. No man in his senses thinks otherwise. Thus, also, no one doubts but that the sun will rise to-morrow, and will be seen, if seen at all, in the figure of a circle, and not in that of a square. So again, we conclude that there is no kind of presumption that there will not be frost in England any given day in January next; that it is probable that there will on some day of that month, and that there is almost a moral certainty of it in some part or other of the winter. In like manner, when we observe in human affairs generally, that any thing does regularly come to pass, we infer that other things which are like to it, or have analogy with it, will also come to pass. Human concerns are all carried on by this natural process of reasoning. And yet we have no demonstrative evidence in any such cases. Thus we believe that a child, if it lives twenty years, will grow up to the strength and stature of a man; that food will contribute to the preservation of its life; and the want of food for a certain number of days be its certain destruction. It is thus men go on continually. They judge and act by what is

probable, and never dream of asking for further evidence. The rule of their hopes and fears, of their calculations of success in their pursuits, of their expectations how others will act in such circumstances, and of their judgment that such actions proceed from such principles, all these rest on the argument from analogy, that is, on their having observed before the like things with respect to themselves or others. Especially, if any great scheme of things is laid before men claiming to be the plan of such and such a person, and demanding certain efforts and duties, they compare this scheme with the acknowledged productions of that person, and judge by analogy whether it is his or not. They compare the part of this person's designs which is known and familiar to them, with the new scheme at present unknown, in order to form a probable opinion. If, on consideration, they can trace the same mind in both plans, the same ends, the same sort of means, the same general laws, the same benevolence and wisdom, the same vastness of comprehension, the same apparent perplexity working the same good results, the same moral

characteristics and features, and, above all, a dependence and connexion between the two; they conclude that they both proceed from the same author. And if objections should be raised against the new and unknown scheme, which, on calm inquiry, seem to lie equally against the scheme already known and acknowledged to come from the same hand, these objections have no weight with them, that is, they are answered by the analogy or likeness which the one constitution and scheme bears to the other. Persons who doubt of the force of a probable argument in religion, should consider in this way what evidence that is upon which they act every day with regard to their temporal interests. They act in the daily course of life upon evidence much lower than what is called probable. In questions of the greatest consequence, a reasonable man marks the lowest probabilities, such as amount to no more than showing that one side of a question is as supposable and credible as the other. And any one would be thought mad who did not do so, in many cases. Men not only guard against what they fully believe will happen, but also

against what they think it possible may happen; they often engage in pursuits when the probability is greatly against success; they make such provision for themselves as it is supposable that they may have occasion for, though the plain acknowledged probability is, that they never will have such occasion.

Indeed it is a real imperfection in the moral character, not to be influenced in practice by any degree of evidence, even the lowest, when it is discovered. Men are under a formal and absolute obligation to act in practical matters on the side of the least preponderating probability. As when we weigh two things in a pair of true scales, the smallest inclination of the beam enables us to see which is the heavier, and binds us to act on the fact that it is so: so, in matters of practice, the smallest degree of weight on one side more than another, enables us to see what is our duty, and binds us to act accordingly.

If, then, the analogy of nature only showed us that there was the lowest presumption of the truth of religion notwithstanding difficulties, men would be formally and absolutely bound to believe and obey it. But if this

analogy shows that there is not merely a low presumption, but the highest probability of its truth, and that the very objections to it rest on such matters as are apparently inconclusive, when applied to that system of things in Providence which is acknowledged to come from an All-wise and Almighty Creator; nay more, that these very objections may, for any thing we know, be really benefits, yea, most important instances, upon the whole, of the Divine goodness, the duty of the obedience to it becomes still more imperative. And when it is considered that, besides this argument from analogy silencing our scruples, the numerous direct evidences of Christianity remain what they were before, unanswered and unanswerable, the obligation to receive the Christian doctrine becomes, in fact, the first and paramount duty of a reasonable and accountable creature; and the rashness and guilt of rejecting it become criminal and absurd, in a degree which no words can express.

This, then, is the general design of Bishop Butler. He undertakes to show, that men cannot reject Christianity on the footing of

objections, without acting against those rules of probability by which they have been guided all their lives in all their most important concerns, and by which they are guided continually, and must be guided, however they may act with regard to Christianity. Thus our author leaves the unbeliever without excuse—condemned by his own conduct on all like occasions—condemned by the universal experience of mankind—and acting in the most important of all subjects in an opposite manner to what common sense and common prudence compel him to do every day of his life, on the most momentous, as well as the slightest occasions. Such is the scope of this celebrated Treatise. If we have dwelt longer than might seem necessary in explaining it, let it be remembered, that it is the key to all that follows.

ANALYSIS OF BISHOP BUTLER'S ARGUMENT.

After this sketch of the design of the Analogy, let us now proceed TO GIVE AN IDEA, SO FAR AS WE MAY BE ABLE, OF THE SEVERAL STEPS OF OUR AUTHOR'S ARGUMENT. We say, so far as we may be able; for it is no easy task to compress and simplify a series of close and profound reasoning. However, some assistance may be given. The reader's patience is requested. Such an author demands and rewards the utmost attention, and cannot be understood without it.

The whole Treatise is divided into two parts. In the First, the author shows, that the things principally objected against natural religion, are analogous to what is experienced in the course of nature, and, therefore, inconclusive. In the Second, he shows the same as to Christianity, or Revealed Religion. In the First Part, he considers, as we shall presently see more at length, by a separate review of each topic, that natural religion teaches, 1. That mankind is to live hereafter in a future state. 2. That there every one shall be rewarded or punished. 3. That these rewards and punishments will be ac-

cording to men's good or evil behaviour here. 4. That our present life is a probation, or trial. 5. That it is a state of moral discipline for a future life. 6. That the notion of necessity forms no valid objection against these truths; and, 7. That as this plan of religion is but very partially made known to us in this world, no objections against its wisdom and goodness are of any real weight. These points we shall consider in seven separate chapters.

From this view of natural religion, we shall proceed with Butler in the Second Part of his work, to weigh, 1. The importance of Christianity; 2. The objections raised against it, on the ground of its being miraculous; and, 3. Our incapacity of judging what was to be expected in a revelation, and the credibility that it would contain things apparently open to objections. 4. We shall next have to consider, Christianity as a scheme imperfectly comprehended; then, 5. The particular system itself of Christianity, the appointment of a Mediator, and the redemption of the world by him; and, 6. The want of universality in revelation, and the supposed de-

ficiency in the proof of it. After this, we shall have to notice, 7. The objections against the particular evidence for Christianity; and lastly, 8. The objections which may be made generally against thus arguing from the analogy of nature to religion. These will be the heads of eight chapters. The following review will accordingly contain seven chapters in the first division of it, and eight in the second.

The author begins his Treatise (Part I. Chap. I.) with that which is the foundation of all our hopes and all our fears; all our hopes and fears which are of any consideration—a Future Life. He takes for granted that there is an Intelligent Author of Nature, whose moral will and character is just and good in the very highest degree. This Author of Nature formed the universe as it is, and carries on the course of it as he does, rather than in any other manner. Men, as rational creatures, cannot but reflect on the mysterious scheme of things in the midst of which they find themselves; and cannot but inquire whence they came and whither they are going, and what will be the end or issue

of the system in which they are placed. Now it will appear, in the first place, from considering the analogy of nature, that there is nothing improbable in what religion teaches, that we are to exist in another life after death. There is, indeed, a confused suspicion, that in the great shock of the unknown event, death, our living powers will be destroyed. The sensible proof of our being possessed of these powers is removed. Death is terrible to us. Nature shrinks from it. Yet, when we come calmly to consider these apprehensions, we shall find them to be groundless.

1. For it is clearly a general law of nature, that the same creatures should exist here in very different degrees of life and perception. We see instances of this law in the surprising change of worms into flies, and in birds and insects bursting their shell, and entering into a new world furnished with new accommodations for them. The states also in which we ourselves existed formerly in the womb, and in the years of infancy, are widely different from the state of mature age. Nothing can be imagined more different. Therefore, that we are to exist hereafter in

a state as different from our present, as this is from our former one, is only according to the analogy of nature.

2. There is a probability, in every case, that all things will continue as we now find them, in all respects, except those in which we have some positive reason to think they will be altered. This is a general law. Nature goes on as it is. This seems our only reason for believing that the course of the world will continue to-morrow, as it is to-day, and as it has done, so far as experience and history can carry us back. If then our living powers do not continue after death, there must be some positive reason for this, either *in death itself*, or in *the analogy of nature.*

But there is no positive reason *in death itself*, for we know not what it is; we only know some of its effects, such as the dissolution of flesh, skin, and bones; and these effects in nowise appear to imply the destruction of the living agent. Sleep, or a swoon, shows us that the living powers may exist when there is no present capacity of exercising them. In fact we know not upon what the existence of our living powers depends.

Nor does *the analogy of nature* furnish any positive reason to think that death is our destruction. For we have no faculties wherewith to trace any thing beyond, or through death, to see what becomes of those powers. Men were possessed of these powers up to the period to which we have faculties for tracing them; it is probable, therefore, that they retain them afterwards.

3. For our gross bodies are not ourselves, and therefore the destruction of them may be no destruction of ourselves. We see that men may lose their limbs, their organs of sense, and even the greatest part of their bodies, and yet remain the same living agents as before. Our organized bodies are merely large quantities of matter which may be alienated, and actually are in a daily course of succession and change, whilst we remain the same living permanent beings notwithstanding. As, therefore, we have already several times over lost a great part of our body, or perhaps the whole of it, according to certain common established laws of nature; so when we shall lose as great a part, or the whole, by another common established law

of nature, death, why may we not also remain the same? That the alienation has been gradual in one case, and will be more at once in the other, proves nothing to the contrary.

4. But, more particularly, our bodies are clearly only organs and instruments of perception and motion. Our use of common optical instruments shows that we see with our eyes in the same sense, and in no other, as we see with glasses. These glasses, which are no part of our body, convey objects towards the perceiving power, just as our bodily organs do. And if we see with our eyes only in this manner, the like may be concluded as to all our other senses. So with regard to the power of moving: upon the destruction of a limb, the active power remains; and we can walk by the help of an artificial leg, just as we can make use of a pole to reach things beyond the length of the natural arm. We may therefore have no more relation to our external bodily organs, than we have to a microscope or a staff, or any other foreign matter, which we use as instruments of perception or motion: and the

dissolution of these organs by death may be no destruction of the living agent.

5. But farther, our powers of reflection do not, even now, depend on our gross body in the same manner as perception by the organs of sense does. In our present condition, the organs of sense are indeed necessary for conveying in ideas to our reflecting powers, as carriages, and levers, and scaffolds are in architecture; but when these ideas are once brought in, and stored up in the mind, we are capable of pleasure and pain by reflection, without any further assistance from our senses. Mortal diseases often do not at all affect our intellectual powers, nor even suspend them. We see persons under those diseases, the moment before death, discover apprehension, memory, reason, all entire—the utmost force of affection, and the highest mental enjoyments and sufferings; why then should a disease, when come to a certain degree, be thought to destroy those powers, which do not depend on the bodily senses, and which were not affected by that disease quite up to that degree?

6. Nay, our future existence may pro-

bably be not the beginning, properly speaking, of any thing new, but only the continuance, the going on of our present life as intelligent agents. Death may only answer to our birth, which is not a suspension of the faculties we had before, nor a total change of the state of life in which we existed when in the womb, but a continuance of both, with such and such great alterations. And our present relation to our bodily organs may be the only natural hindrance to our existing hereafter in a higher state of being and reflection.

7. But even if death suspends our living powers, which does not appear, yet a sleep or a swoon may teach us that the suspension of a power and the destruction of it, are effects totally different.

8. On the whole, the analogy of nature makes it probable, that as we are conscious that we are now living agents, so we shall go on to be such, notwithstanding the event of death, which, it is likely, may only serve to bring us into new scenes, and a new state of life and action, just as naturally as we came into the present. This will appear most pro-

bable, if we would only leave off the delusive custom of substituting imagination in the room of experience, and would confine ourselves to what we really know and understand.

CHAPTER II. A future state being once granted, an unbounded prospect is opened to our hopes and fears. The expectation of immortality is not a matter of indifference, but a subject of the deepest importance. For the whole analogy of nature shows that there is nothing incredible in the supposition that God will reward and punish men hereafter for their actions here. And it is infinitely unreasonable in men to act upon any other supposition.

1. For in the present life, we see that pleasure and pain are the consequences of our actions, and that we are endued with capacities of foreseeing these consequences, and acting accordingly. This is the constitution of the Author of Nature. By prudence and care we may pass our days in tolerable quiet; by rashness, passion, wilfulness, or even by negligence, (which is very observable) we may make ourselves as miserable as we please. This is the general

course of things. God's method as the Governor of the universe, is clearly to forewarn us of such and such things, and to give us capacities of foreseeing, that if we act so and so, we shall have such and such enjoyments and sufferings.

2. It is then a simple matter of fact, that we are under the dominion of God here, just as we are under the dominion and rule of civil magistrates; because the annexing pleasure to some actions, and pain to others, and the giving notice of this beforehand, is the proper formal notion of government. We are thus compelled to admit, that the Author of Nature acts here as a Master or Governor: there can, therefore, be nothing incredible in the general doctrine of religion, that God will act thus hereafter—that is, will reward and punish men for their behaviour.

3. But as divine punishment is what men chiefly object against, and are most unwilling to allow, it is important to observe, not merely that there is a great deal of misery, in the world, but that there is a great deal, which men bring upon themselves, and which they might have foreseen and avoided. Now the

circumstances of these natural punishments are such as these.—They are often the consequences of actions which procure many present advantages, and bring much present pleasure. Again, they are often much greater than the advantages or pleasures of the actions which they follow. They are frequently delayed a great while; sometimes till long after the actions occasioning them are forgot. They then come, after such delay, not by degrees, but suddenly, with violence, and at once. They are often not thought of during the actions themselves; yet still they inevitably follow. Thus habits formed in youth are utter ruin for life; though, for the most part, this consequence is little thought of at the time.

4. We observe further, that the natural course of things gives us opportunities, which, like the seed-time, cannot be recalled if we once neglect them; and that, in many cases, real repentance and reformation are of no avail to remedy or prevent the miseries naturally annexed to previous folly; that neglects from mere inconsiderateness and want of attention, are often as fatal as from any active

misconduct; and that many natural punishments are mortal, and seem inflicted either to remove the offender out of the way of being further mischievous, or as an example to others.

5. Now these things are not accidental, but are matters of every day's experience, proceeding from general laws by which God obviously is governing the world; and they are so analogous to what religion teaches us concerning the future punishment of the wicked, that both may be expressed in the very same words.

6. Especially we see, that after men's neglecting repeated warnings, and many checks, in a course of vice—after these have been long scorned—and after the worst consequences of their follies have been delayed for a great while; at length their punishment breaks in upon them irresistibly, like an armed force; repentance is too late to relieve their misery—the case is desperate; and poverty and sickness, remorse and anguish, infamy and death, overwhelm them, as the effects of their own behaviour, beyond the possibility of remedy or escape.

7. Not that men are thus uniformly punished here in proportion to their vices, but they often are: very many such cases occur, and dreadful ones too — cases quite sufficient to show what the laws of the universe may admit, and to answer all objections against future punishments, from the vain idea, that the frailty of nature, and the force of temptations (as men sometimes speak) almost annihilate the guilt of human vices.

8. Thus, on the whole, the particular final causes of pleasure and pain distributed by Almighty God here, prove that we are under his government, in the same way as subjects are under the rule of civil magistrates. And future rewards and punishments are but an appointment, analogous and of the same sort with what we thus actually experience in this world, in the regular course of universal Providence.

CHAP. III. But further; this natural government of God, under which we now find ourselves, is a moral or righteous government. It is not merely a government by rewards and punishments, like that which a

master exercises over his servants, which in human affairs is often exercised tyrannically and partially, but one which renders to men according to their actions, considered as morally good or evil. This is the next step in removing objections against natural religion.

Men have no ground whatever to assert that God is simply and absolutely benevolent —this indeed may be so upon the whole— but he clearly manifests himself unto us as a righteous Governor. This government, indeed, so far as it is seen here, and taken alone, is not complete and perfect; but still a righteous government is carried on here, quite sufficiently to give us the apprehension that it shall be completed in a future life. We see now the clear beginnings, the rudiments of a moral government, notwithstanding all the confusion and disorder of the world. This is enough to answer all objections against the future judgment, which religion teaches us to expect.

1. For as God is our Governor, no rule of his government appears to creatures endued with a moral nature as we are, so natural, so unavoidable, considering his infinite

perfections, as that of distributive justice. The expectation then of this is not in itself absurd or chimerical.

2. Next, as God has endued us with capacities of foreseeing the good and bad consequences of our behaviour, and rewards and punishes prudence and imprudence respectively, this plainly implies some sort of moral government. Tranquility and satisfaction follow a prudent management of our affairs; and rashness and negligence bring after them many sufferings. These are instances of a right constitution of things here; just as the correction of children, when they run into danger, or hurt themselves, is a part of right education.

3. Again, the Author of Nature has so appointed things, that vicious actions, as falsehood, injustice, cruelty, &c. must be punished, and are punished as mischievous to society. He has put mankind under a necessity of thus punishing them, just as he has put them under a necessity of preserving their lives by food. Thus men are, in some respects, unavoidably under a moral government here, they are punished or rewarded as being mischievous or beneficial to society.

4. Again, we are so formed that virtue, as such, gives us satisfaction, at least in some instances; vice, as such, and on its own account, in none. This is a proof not only of government, but of moral government, begun and established — moral in the strictest sense, though not in that perfection of degree, which religion teaches us to expect. The sense of well and ill doing, the presages of conscience, the love which men have to good characters, and the dislike of bad ones; honour, shame, gratitude; vexation and remorse, arising from reflection on an action done by us, as being wrong; disturbance and fear, from a sense of being blameworthy: and, on the other hand, inward security and peace, complacency and joy of heart, accompanying the exercise of friendship, compassion, benevolence; — all this shows that we are placed here in a condition, in which our moral nature operates in favouring virtue and punishing vice. Vice cannot at all be, and virtue cannot but be, favoured on some occasions, and for its own sake, by ourselves and others. The one cannot but be miserable; the other cannot but be happy in itself, in some degree.

And though the wicked are at times prosperous, in some respects and externally, and the righteous afflicted, this cannot, and does not, drown the voice of Providence, plainly declaring, in the course of things, for virtue upon the whole. For it is clear that these disorders are brought about by the perversion of passions, which were implanted in us for other, and those very good purposes.

5. Once more, there is, in the natural course of things, a tendency in virtue and vice to produce their good and bad effects in a greater degree than they do in fact produce them. This is a very considerable thing. Good and bad men would be much more rewarded and punished here as such, were not justice eluded by various artifices, were not characters unknown, were not many other hinderances presented by accidental causes. But these hinderances may be removed in a future state, and virtue enjoy its proper and full reward. In the mean time, these tendencies are declarations of God in his natural Providence in favour of virtue. To judge better of the tendency of virtue to produce happiness, let any one consider what a

nation would become, if all its citizens were perfectly virtuous; and that for a succession of ages. Wars would be unknown; passions would be restrained; crimes, factions, envy, jealousy, injustice would be banished; laws and punishments would be unnecessary; all would contribute to the public prosperity, and each would enjoy the fruits of his own virtue. United wisdom would plan every thing, and united strength execute it. Such a kingdom would be like heaven upon earth. If any think the tendency of virtue to produce these results to be of little importance, I ask him what he would think if vice had essentially these advantageous tendencies.

6. The notion, then, of a moral righteous government is suggested by the course of nature, and the execution of it is, as we have seen, actually begun; and there is ground to believe that virtue and vice may be rewarded and punished hereafter in a higher degree than they are here, because the tendencies, to the perfection of this moral scheme are natural; whilst the hinderances are only accidental.

CHAP. IV. If this be so—if there be this moral government, then it implies, in the next place, that our present life is a state of probation; that our future interest is appointed to depend on our behaviour, just in the same manner as our temporal interest is appointed to depend on our behaviour. And this state of probation implies, in both cases, difficulty in securing our happiness, and the danger of losing it.

1. For we are clearly at present in a state of trial as to this world, under God's natural government. So far as men are tempted to any course of action, which will probably occasion them greater inconvenience than satisfaction, they are in a state of trial as to their temporal interests, and those interests are in danger from themselves. Now, from the course of things around us, we have innumerable temptations to forfeit and neglect these temporal interests, and to run ourselves into misery and ruin: thence arises the difficulty of behaving so as to secure our temporal interests, and the hazard of behaving so as to miscarry in them. And outward temptations, concurring, as they always do, with

inward habits and passions, as really put men in danger of voluntarily foregoing their temporal interests, as their future ones, and as really render self-denial necessary to secure one as the other: so analogous are our states of trial in our temporal and religious capacities.

2. Again, as to both states we see that some men scarcely look beyond the passing day, so much are they taken up with present gratifications; that others are carried away by passions against their better judgment, and their feeble resolutions of acting better; and that some even avow pleasure to be their rule of life, and go on in vice, foreseeing that it will be their temporal ruin, and apprehending at times that it may possibly be their future ruin also. Thus the dangers in both states produce the same effects, as they proceed from the same causes; that is, they are analogous and alike.

3. Further, in both states our dangers are increased by the ill behaviour of others, by wrong education, bad example, corruption of religion, mistaken notions concerning happiness.

4. Again, in both, men by negligence and folly bring themselves into new difficulties, no less than by a course of vice; and by habits of indulgence become less qualified to meet them. For instance, wrong behaviour in youth increases the difficulty of right behaviour in mature age; that is, puts us in a more disadvantageous state of trial.

5. In both, also, we are in a condition which does not seem the most advantageous for securing our true interests. There are natural appearances of our being in a state of degradation. Yet we have no ground of complaint; for as men may manage their temporal affairs by prudence, so as to pass their days in tolerable ease; so with respect to religion, no more is required than we must be greatly wanting to ourselves if we neglect.

6. Once more, as thought, and self-denial, and things far from agreeable, are absolutely necessary for securing our temporal interests, all presumption against the same being necessary for securing our higher interests is removed.

7. Had we not experience as our guide, we might, indeed, in speculation, urge it to

be impossible that any thing of hazard should be put upon us by an Infinite Being, since every thing which is hazardous in our conception, is now already certain in his foreknowledge. And indeed this may well be thought a difficulty in speculation, and cannot but be so, till we know the whole, or however much more of the case. And if mankind, as inhabitants of this world, really found themselves always in a settled state of security, without any solicitude on their part, and in no danger of falling into distresses and miseries, by carelessness or passion, by bad example, or the deceitful appearances of things,—then it would be some presumption against religion, that it represents us in a state of trial and danger as to our future happiness. But now the whole course of nature shows us that we are in a state of extreme hazard as to our temporal interests. And this constitution of things is settled by Almighty God as our natural Governor. It is as it is. This is quite clear. And this is sufficient to answer all objections against the credibility of our being in a state of trial and difficulty,

under the moral government of the same God, as to our future and eternal interests.

CHAP. V. If we go on to ask, how we came to be placed in a probationary state of so much difficulty and hazard, we have already said that we can give no complete answer. Possibly it would be beyond our faculties, not only to find out, but even to understand the whole reason; and even if we had faculties, whether it would be of service or prejudice to us to be informed of it, it is impossible to say. Still another question may be naturally put, to which a satisfactory reply may be given. If it be asked, What is our main duty here, as placed in this state of trial and difficulty? analogy will help us to answer, For moral discipline, as preparatory to a future state of security and happiness. The beginning of life in the present world, considered as an education for mature age, appears plainly, at first sight, analogous to this trial for a future one.

1. For our nature here corresponds to our external condition, and what we call happiness is the result of this nature and this condition. Now as there are some determi-

nate character and qualifications necessary to men's enjoyment of the present life; so analogy leads us to conclude, that there must be some determinate character and qualifications to render men capable of the future life of the good hereafter. The one is set over against the other.

2. In the next place, we see that the constitution and faculties of men are such, that they are capable of naturally becoming qualified for states of life, for which they were at first wholly unqualified. The human faculties are made for gradual enlargement; habit gives us new faculties in any kind of action, and produces secret, but settled and fixed alterations in our temper and character. As habits of the body are produced by repeated acts, so habits of the mind are produced by carrying into act inward principles; such as obedience, submission to authority, veracity, justice, charity, attention, industry, self-government. Habit forms men to these virtues; just as habit forms the archer to skill, the porter to strength of arm, the racer to swiftness, the artizan in every kind of manufacture, to adroitness and precision. Such is the

constitution of our nature. By accustoming ourselves to any course of action, we get an aptness to go on in it: the inclinations which made us averse to it grow weaker; the real difficulties of it lessen; the reasons for it offer themselves of course; and thus a new character may be formed, not given us by nature, but which nature directs us to acquire.

3. These capacities of improvement are most important. Man is left, considered in his relation to this world only, an unformed, weak, unfinished creature, wholly unqualified for the mature state of life to which he is designed. He needs the acquisitions of knowledge, experience, and habits, in order at all to attain the ends of his creation. And he is placed, in childhood and youth, in a condition fitted for supplying his deficiencies. Children from their birth are daily learning something necessary for them in the future scenes of their duty. The first years of life are a course of education for the practice of adult age. We are much assisted in it by example, instruction, and the care of others, but a great deal is left to ourselves to do; and diligence, care, the voluntary foregoing

many things which we desire, and the setting ourselves to many things to which we have no inclination, are absolutely necessary to our doing this. All this is clear. We see it every day. In like manner, then, our being placed in a state of moral discipline throughout this life, as a state of education for another world, is a plain providential order of things, exactly of the same kind, and comprehended under one and the same general law of nature.

4. Nor would it be any objection against this view of things if we were not able to discern in what way the present life could be a preparation for another; for we actually do not discern how food and sleep bring about the growth of the body; nor do children at all think that their sports contribute to their health, nor that restraint and discipline are so necessary, as we know they are, to fit them for the business of mature age.

5. But we are, in fact, able to discern how the present life is fit to be a state of discipline for another. If we consider that God's government of us is a moral one, and that consequently piety and virtue are necessary

qualifications for a future state, then we may distinctly see that the present course of things is adapted to improve us in virtue, and prepare us for a future world, just as childhood is a natural state of discipline, and a necessary preparation for mature age. Now how greatly we want moral improvement by discipline is clear, from the great wickedness of the world, and the imperfections of the best men. This every one sees.

6. But all do not see that mankind, not merely as corrupt, but as finite creatures, need the habits of virtue, which discipline goes to form, to keep them from deviating from what is right. Men, from the very constitution of their nature, before habits of virtue are formed, are in danger. For the natural objects of the affections, continue to be such, whether they can be obtained innocently or not; and such affections have a tendency to incline us to venture upon unlawful means of obtaining them. The practical principle of virtue is then the security against this danger; and this principle is strengthened by discipline and exercise; and thus guards

against the danger arising from the very nature of particular affections.

7. If such finite creatures as men, endued with particular affections and moral understanding, had all these several parts upright or finitely perfect, they would still be in danger of falling, and would require experience and habits to improve them, and place them in a secure state. As these habits strengthen, their dangers would lessen, and their security increase. For virtuous self-government is not only right in itself, but improves the inward constitution and character; just as vicious indulgence is not only criminal in itself, but also weakens and depraves the inward constitution and character. And thus we may conceive how creatures without blemish may be in danger of going wrong, and may need the additional security of virtuous habits.

8. But how much more strongly must this hold with respect to those who have corrupted their natures. Upright creatures may want to be improved; depraved creatures want to be renewed. Discipline is expedient for the upright; but absolutely necessary for the

depraved—and discipline of the severer sort too.

9. Now the present world is peculiarly fitted to be a state of discipline for this purpose. Temptation, experience of the deceits of wickedness, our past faults, the vice and disorder of the world—pain, sorrow, disappointment, vexation—all have a tendency to bring us to that moderation of temper which is contrary to the violent bent to follow present inclination, which may be observed in undisciplined minds. Such experience gives a practical sense of things. And possibly the security of creatures in the highest state of perfection may, in part, arise from their having had such a sense of things as this habitually fixed within them, in a state of probation. Their having passed through the present world with that moral attention which a state of discipline requires, may leave everlasting impressions of this sort upon their minds. Now when the exercise of the virtuous principle is continued, often repeated and intense, as it must be in circumstances of danger and temptation, the habit of virtue is proportionably increased. Thus the present

world is peculiarly fit to be a state of discipline, in the same sense as some sciences, by requiring and engaging the attention, not, to be sure, of such persons as will not, but of such as will, set themselves to them; are fit to form the mind to habits of attention.

10. Accordingly we find there are some persons who follow an inward principle of piety, and to whom the present world is an exercise of virtue peculiarly adapted to improve it—adapted to improve it, in some respects, even beyond what it would be by the exercise of it in a perfectly virtuous society.

11. That the present world does not actually become a state of moral discipline to the generality, is no proof that it was not intended to be so: for out of the immense number of seeds of vegetables, and bodies of animals which are adapted to improve to such and such a point of natural maturity and perfection, we do not see that perhaps one in a thousand does thus improve; yet no one will deny that those seeds and bodies which do so attain to that point of maturity, answer the end for which they were designed by nature,

and therefore that nature designed them for that perfection. And such an amazing waste in nature, with respect to these seeds and bodies, by foreign causes, is, to us as unaccountable as, what is much more terrible, the present and future ruin of so many moral agents by themselves, that is, by vice.

12. Further, these observations on the active principle of obedience to God, are applicable to passive obedience to his will, or resignation, which is another essential part of a right character. For though we may have no need of patience in a future state, yet we may have need of that temper, which patience has formed; and the proper discipline for patience and resignation is affliction. This resignation, together with the active principle of obedience, makes up the temper which answers to God's sovereignty, to his rightful authority, as supreme over all.

13. It cannot be objected to all this, that the trouble and danger of this discipline might have been spared us by our being made at once the characters which we were to become; for we see by experience that what we are to become is to depend on what we

will do; and that the general law of nature is, not to save us trouble or danger, but to make us capable of going through it.

14. The world, further, is a state of probation, is a theatre of action for the manifestation of persons' characters, as a means of their being disposed of suitably to those characters, and of its being known to the creation by way of example that they are so disposed of.

15. It thus appears clearly, on the whole, that our present state of difficulty and trial is intended to be a school of discipline for acquiring the qualifications necessary for a future state of safety and happiness.

Chap. VI. Nor does the opinion of necessity weaken the credibility of the general doctrine of religion thus confirmed by Analogy. For if any persons consider the notion of universal necessity or fate to be reconcileable with the acknowledged condition of men as under God's natural government now, (and to such persons only does this whole treatise address itself) they must also consider it to be reconcileable with the scheme of religion

1. For necessity clearly does not exclude deliberation, choice, and the acting from certain principles to certain ends, as to the things of this present world; because all this is matter of undoubted experience. For if the instance of a house be taken, the Fatalist as well as others, would agree that it was designed and built by an architect; and they would only differ upon the question, whether the architect built it in the manner, which we call necessarily, or in the manner which we call freely. The idea of necessity does not, then, at all destroy the proof that there is an intelligent Author and Governor of nature, any more than that the house was built by an architect.

2. Nor does necessity destroy at all the scheme of religion. For as to the things of this world, suppose a Fatalist to bring up a child in the idea that he is not a subject of blame or praise for his actions, because he cannot help doing what he does. The child would be vain and conceited, and go on following his will and passions till he became first the plague of himself and family, and then insupportable to society; and thus he would soon

do something, for which he would be delivered over into the hands of justice. In this way the correction he would meet with, and the misery consequent upon it, would soon convince him, that either the scheme of necessity, in which he was educated was false, or that he reasoned inconclusively upon it, and somehow or other misapplied it to practice and common life. In like manner, what the Fatalist experiences of the conduct of Providence at present, ought in all reason to convince him, that either his scheme of necessity is false, or that somehow or other it is misapplied, when brought to practical duty and religion in common life. Under the present natural government of the world, we are obviously dealt with as if we were free; and therefore the analogy of nature answers all objections to our being dealt with as free, with regard to another world. Thus the notion of necessity, whether true or not in speculation, is not applicable to practical subjects. With respect to them it is as if it were not true.

3. Again, we find, by constant experience, that happiness and misery are not ne-

cessary here, in such a sense as not to be the consequences of our behaviour, for they are the clear consequences of it; and God exercises over us the same kind of government in this world, as a father does over his children, and a civil magistrate over his subjects. These are matters of fact, things of experience, which cannot be affected by the opinion about necessity. In like manner, God's moral government over men, as taught by religion, cannot be affected by that opinion.

4. Besides, natural religion has an external evidence, a positive foundation in facts and data, which the mere opinion of necessity cannot affect.

5. And, if men should say that, Necessity being true, it is incredible that God should govern us upon a supposition of freedom which is false; the plain answer is, that there must be a fallacy somewhere in this conclusion, for the whole analogy of nature proves that God does govern us by rewards and punishments as free agents. And the fallacy lies, supposing necessity to be true, in taking it for granted that necessary agents cannot be rewarded and punished for their behaviour.

6. Thus, the notion of necessity, supposing it can be reconciled with the constitution of things, and what we experience under God's rule here, is equally and entirely reconcileable with the scheme of religion also.

CHAP. VII. Still objections may be insisted upon against the wisdom, equity, and goodness of the divine government implied in the notion of religion, to which analogy (which can only show that such and such things are credible, considered as matters of fact,) can give no direct answer. But if analogy suggests that the divine government is a scheme or system, as distinguished from a number of unconnected acts of justice and goodness, and a scheme imperfectly comprehended, then this gives a general, though indirect answer to all objections against the justice and goodness of that government.

1. Now in this present world and the whole natural government of it, there is obviously a scheme or system carried on, whose parts correspond to each other; so that there is no natural event so single and unconnected as not to have respect to some other actions

or events: just as any work of art, or any particular civil constitution of government, is a scheme, and has various correspondent parts. Nor can we give the whole account of any one thing whatever in nature—of all its causes, ends, and necessary adjuncts, without which it could not have been. Things seemingly the most insignificant imaginable, are perpetually discovered to be necessary conditions of other things of the greatest importance.

2. The natural world, then, being such an incomprehensible scheme, so incomprehensible that a man must really, in the literal sense, know nothing at all, who is not sensible of his ignorance of it; this strongly shows the credibility that the moral world may be so too. Indeed the natural and moral world are so connected, as probably to make up together but one scheme; and thus the first may be carried on in subserviency to the second; as the vegetable world is for the animal, and the animal for the rational.

3. In this way every act of Divine justice and goodness may look much beyond itself, and may have some reference to a general

moral system; yea, may have such respect to all other acts, as to make up altogether a whole, connected and related in all its parts, which is as properly one as the natural world is. And if so, then it is most clear that we are not at all competent judges of this vast scheme, from the small parts of it, which come within our view in the present life, and that objections against any of these parts are utterly unreasonable. Yet this ignorance, which is universally acknowledged on other like occasions, is, if not denied, yet universally forgotten on the subject of religion where it is most strikingly applicable. Even reasonable men do not make allowance enough for it. And this ignorance answers all objections against religion; because if religion be a scheme incomprehensible to us, some unknown relation, or some unknown impossibility, may render the very things objected to, just and good; nay, just and good in the highest practicable degree.

4. But more particularly, we see in the natural world, that as no ends are accomplished without means, so means very undesirable are found to bring about ends so desirable

as to overbalance much the previous disagreeableness—means which, before experience, we should have thought to have a contrary tendency. Thus, in the moral world, things which we call irregularities may not be so, but may be means of accomplishing wise and good ends more considerable than the apparent irregularities; yea, the only means by which those ends are capable of being accomplished.

5. This, however, is no argument to show that it is not infinitely obligatory on us, and beneficial to abstain from what is evil. For thus, in the wise and good constitution of the natural world, there are disorders, which bring their own cures; yea, some diseases, which are remedies. As many men would undoubtedly have died had it not been for the gout or a fever; yet it would be thought madness to say that sickness is a better state than health; though men have asserted the like absurdity to this, with regard to the moral world and moral evil.

6. Again, the natural world is carried on by general laws, and not by particular interpositions to prevent or remedy irregularities,

as the moral world may also be; and in both there may be the wisest reasons for this scheme, for any thing we know. Perpetual interposition would, for instance, clearly encourage indolence, and render the rule of life dubious, which is now ascertained by this very thing, that the course of the world is carried on by general laws. And if this be the case, then the not interposing on every particular occasion, is so far from being a ground of complaint, that it is an instance of goodness. This is intelligible and sufficient; and going farther seems beyond the utmost reach of our faculties. It is to go on quite at random and in the dark.

7. Thus our ignorance answers all objections against the scheme of religion, as we have shown; because it is not a total ignorance, as some have said, of the whole subject, which would preclude equally all proof and all objection, but a partial ignorance, which allows us to understand that the end of the scheme is moral, but does not allow us to comprehend what means are best to accomplish this end. Therefore, our ignorance is an answer to objections against Providence

in permitting irregularities, as seeming contradictory to this end. Analogy shows that it is not at all incredible, that if we could know the whole, we should find the things objected to consistent with justice and goodness, yea, instances of it. Thus we do not argue from our ignorance properly speaking, but from something which analogy shows us concerning that ignorance. For analogy positively shows us that our ignorance of the various relations of things in nature, makes us incompetent judges in cases similar to this of religion, in which we pretend to judge.

8. Finally, we are thus led to consider this little scene of human life in which we are so busy, as having a reference to a much larger plan of things. Whether we are related to the more distant parts of the boundless universe, is altogether uncertain. But it is evident that we are placed in the middle of a progressive scheme, incomprehensible with respect to what has been, what now is, and what shall be hereafter. Thus all short-sighted objections against God's moral government are answered; and it is absurd—absurd to the degree of being ridiculous, if the

subject were not of so serious a kind, for men to lay any stress on these objections, and think themselves secure in a vicious life, or even in that immoral thoughtlessness into which far the greatest part of men are fallen.

PART II.—CHAP. I. The chief difficulties against natural religion, as implying a moral government, and a state of trial and discipline preparatory for a future world, being removed, we proceed to consider Christianity, and the objections raised against it. And we begin by showing the vast importance of Christianity itself.

1. To say that mankind do not want a revelation, is as extravagant as it would be to say, that they are so completely at ease and happy in the present life, that their condition could not be made better. Those who consider the state of religion in the heathen world before revelation, and the present state of it where revelation is unknown, cannot in seriousness think revelation incredible, upon pretence of its being unnecessary.

2. But many admit Christianity to be true, but object to the importance of it, on

the ground, that to act on the principles of natural religion is enough, as Christianity is only designed to enforce the practice of virtue. This is to suppose that it is a matter of indifference whether we obey God's commands or not, of which there may be infinite reasons with which we are not acquainted.

3. But the high importance of Christianity will appear, if we consider, 1st, That it is a republication of natural religion, teaching it in its genuine purity, investing it with the additional evidence and authority arising from miracles and prophecy, affording a proof of God's general providence as Governor of the world, with a degree of force to which that of nature is but mere feebleness, erecting a visible church, as a standing memorial to the world of its duty to its Maker, giving men the written oracles of God, which cast the light of revelation on the darkness of nature, as to the most important subjects; and establishing a regular education of youth in the principles and habits of piety.

4. If men object to this, that Christianity has been perverted, and has had but little good influence, we answer, that the law of

nature has been perverted and rendered ineffectual in the same manner; and yet this is allowed to be from God. And it may be truly said, that the good effects of Christianity have not been small; nor its supposed ill effects, any effects at all of it, properly speaking. Perhaps, too, the perversions themselves imputed to it have been aggravated; and if not, Christianity has often been only a pretence; and the same evils would have been done, in the main, upon some other pretence. However, they are no arguments against Christianity. For one cannot proceed a step in reasoning upon natural religion, any more than upon Christianity, without laying it down as a first principle, that the dispensations of Providence are not to be judged of by their perversions, but by their genuine tendencies: not from what they actually effect, but from what they would effect, if mankind did their part.

5. Thus Christianity is most important, and the guilt of neglecting it is great, only considered as a supernatural aid to decayed natural religion, and a new promulgation of God's general providence, as righteous Gov-

ernor of the world. Especially as this neglect further involves in it the omitting to do what is expressly enjoined us by God, for continuing the benefits of it to the world, and transmitting them down to future times.

6. But, 2dly, Christianity contains besides, an account of a dispensation of things not at all discoverable by reason; a dispensation carrying on by the Son of God and the Holy Spirit for the recovery of man, whom the Scriptures every where take for granted to be in a state of ruin. In consequence of this, many obligations of duty, unknown before, are revealed; and these obligations of duty to the Son and Spirit, arise from the offices which belong to these Divine Persons, and from the relations in which they stand to us; and are infinitely important. For these reasons, we are commanded to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. By natural religion we know the relation in which God the Father stands to us; and hence arises the bond of duty which we are under to Him. In Scripture are revealed the relations in which the Son and Spirit stand to us; and

hence arise the bonds of duty which we are under to them. It being once admitted that God is the Governor of the world upon the evidence of reason, and that Christ is the mediator between God and man, and the Holy Ghost our guide and sanctifier, upon the evidence of revelation, it is no more a question whether it be our duty to obey, and be baptized into the name of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, than whether it be our duty to obey, and be baptized into the name of the Father.

7. The essence of natural religion may be said to consist in religious regards to God the Father; and the essence of revealed religion, in religious regards to the Son and Holy Ghost, to whom reverence, honour, love, trust, gratitude, fear, hope, are due, from the several relations in which they stand to us. Thus Christianity appears most important. It informs us of something wholly new in the state of the world and in the government of it, of some relations in which we stand, which could not otherwise have been known. And these relations being real, the neglect of behaving suitably to them will

be followed with the same kind of consequences under God's government, as neglecting to behave suitably to any other relations. If Christ, then, be our Mediator, our Lord, and our Saviour, the consequences not only of an obstinate, but of a careless disregard to him in those high relations, may follow in a future world, as surely in a way of judicial punishment, and even of the natural consequences of vice, as those kinds of consequences follow vice in this world.

8. Again, if the nature of man is corrupt, and needs the assistance of God's Holy Spirit to renew it, it cannot be a slight matter to neglect the means appointed of God for obtaining this assistance. All analogy shows us, that we cannot expect benefits without the use of the commanded means—every thing in God's government being conducted by means.

9. The conclusion from all this is, that Christianity being supposed credible, it is unspeakable irreverence, and really the most presumptuous rashness to treat it as a light matter, and unimportant.

10. Before we go on to the next topic,

we may stop here to point out the distinction between what is positive and what is moral in religion. Moral precepts are those of which we see the reason—positive, of which we do not: moral arise out of the nature of the case—positive from external command. But the mere manner in which the reason of the precept, and the nature of the case are made known to us, makes no difference in our duty. Gratitude and love are as much due to Christ as moral precepts, as they are due to the Father; though the first are derived from revelation making Christ known to us as our Mediator; the second, from reason teaching us that the Father is our Creator, and the Fountain of all good.

11. From this distinction between positive and moral precepts, we may observe, that we see the ground of that preference which the Scripture gives to moral precepts over positive, if the two are incompatible. We are to prefer the moral, because we see the reason of them, and because the positive are only means to a moral end, and are of no value, except as proceeding from a moral principle. Men are prone to place their re-

ligion in positive rites, as an equivalent for moral duty; and, therefore, the Scriptures always lay the stress on morals, where they are mentioned, together with positive rites; and our Lord expresses the general spirit of religion when he says, 'I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.'

Still we are not to omit positive institutions; because, when admitted to come from God, they lay us under a strict moral obligation to obey them.

12. To these remarks should be added, that the view we have thus given of Christianity, teaches us, not to determine beforehand from reason what the scheme of it must be, but to search the Scriptures for it; for it is no presumption against an interpretation of Scripture, that it contains a doctrine which the light of nature cannot discover, or a precept to which the law of nature does not oblige.

13. All these considerations serve to heighten the importance of Christianity, as not consisting of positive commands merely, but as revealing new duties resting on new

relations, and being in the strictest sense moral.

CHAP. II. The importance of Christianity having been thus shown, let us next inquire what presumptions or objections there appear to be against revelation in general, or at least against miracles, as if they required stronger evidence than other matters of fact do.

These presumptions must arise either from Christianity not being discoverable by reason and experience, or because it is unlike the course of nature as it now is.

1. But there is no presumption against it, because not discoverable by reason; for suppose any one to be acquainted with what is called the system of natural philosophy and natural religion, he would feel that he knew but a small part of them, and that there must be innumerable things of which he was wholly ignorant. The scheme of nature is vast beyond all possible imagination, and what we know of it is but as a point in comparison of the whole. Therefore, that things lie beyond the reach of our faculties in Chris-

tianity, is no sort of presumption against it, because it is certain there are innumerable things in nature which do so.

2. Nor is there any presumption against Christianity, from the present course of nature, for analogy by no means leads us to suppose, that the whole course of things unknown to us, and every thing in it, is like to any thing in that course of things which is known. Even in the natural course of the world, we see things extremely unlike one another. But the truth is, the scheme of Christianity is not wholly unlike the scheme of nature, as we shall show hereafter.

3. Nor is there any presumption from analogy against some operations which we should call miraculous, particularly none against a revelation at the beginning of the world; for then there had been no course of nature, and therefore the question of a revelation, at that time, is only a common question of fact. Creation was wholly different from the present course of nature; and whether this power stopped after forming man, or went on and gave him a revelation, is a question of simple fact.

4. Nor is there any presumption against miracles, after the settlement of the course of nature. For we have no single parallel case of a world like our own, to deduce an argument from; and if we had a case, an argument from the analogy of that single instance would have little weight. We require the history of many similar worlds from which to raise any thing like a presumption.

5. Besides, we know there is often a presumption against the commonest facts before the proof of them, which yet almost any proof overcomes. And we are in such ignorance, that it is not improbable, that 5 or 6000 years may have given scope for adequate causes for miracles, even leaving out the consideration of religion. But if we take in the consideration of religion, we then see distinct reasons for miracles, which give a real credibility to them. At all events, miracles must not be compared to common natural circumstances and phenomena, but to the extraordinary phenomena of nature,—comets, the powers of electricity, &c. And let any one reflect what would be the presumption, for instance, against the powers of

electricity, in the mind of one acquainted only with the common powers of nature.

6. There is, therefore, no such presumption against miracles as to render them, in any wise incredible; nay, there is a positive credibility for them, where we discern reasons for them; and there is no presumption at all from analogy, even in the lowest degree, against them, as distinguished from other extraordinary phenomena.

Chap. III. We come now to consider objections against the Christian revelation in particular, as distinct from objections against miracles—objections drawn from things in it, appearing to men 'foolishness;' from its containing matters of offence, leading, as it is alleged, to enthusiasm, superstition, and tyranny; from its not being universal; and from its evidence not being so convincing as it might have been.

1. Now it is credible from analogy that we should be incompetent judges of a revelation to a great degree, and that it would contain many things appearing to us liable to objection. There is no more ground to ex-

pect that Christianity should appear free from objections, than that the course of nature should. And the fact is, that men fall into infinite follies and mistakes, when they pretend to judge of the ordinary constitution and course of nature, and of what they should expect it to be. It is therefore probable that men would err much more when they pretend to judge of the extraordinary constitution and scheme of Christianity, and of what they should expect it to be. For if a man, in the things of this present world, is not a competent judge of the ordinary government of a Prince; much less would he be so of any extraordinary exigencies on which that Prince should suspend his known and ordinary laws. Thus objections against Christianity are really frivolous. If men fancy there lie great objections against the scheme of Providence in the ordinary and old laws of nature, much more may they fancy there lie objections against the scheme of Christianity in the extraordinary, and new laws of religion. Both schemes are from the same God. And the objections against Christianity go upon suppositions which, when applied

to the course of nature, experience shows to be inconclusive. They mislead us to think that the Author of nature would not act, as we find by experience he actually does, or would act in such and such a manner, as we experience, in like cases, he does not.

2. For instance, we are no sort of judges before-hand, by what laws, in what degree, or by what means it were to have been expected that God would instruct us naturally in his ordinary Providence; how far he would enable men to communicate it to others; whether the evidence of it would be certain, highly probable, or doubtful; whether it would be given with equal clearness to all; whether at once, or gradually. In like manner, supposing God afforded us an additional instruction by a revelation, we must be equally ignorant beforehand whether the evidence of it would be certain, whether all would have the same degree of evidence, whether it would be revealed at once or gradually, &c.

Now if we are incompetent to judge beforehand of revelation, it is mere folly to object afterwards against its being left in one way rather than another.

3. The only fair question is, whether Christianity be a real revelation, and whether the book containing it be of divine authority; and scarcely at all whether it be a revelation, and a book of such and such a sort. So that, what men object against the Scriptures as being obscure, as written in an inaccurate style, as having various readings, and being the subject of dispute, has no sort of force, unless it can be shown that the sacred authors had promised that the book should be secure from these things. We are no judges whether it were to have been expected that these things should be found in it or not. In human writings we should indeed be judges, but not at all in divine.

4. However, if men will pretend still to judge of the Scriptures, and of Christianity, by previous expectation, then the analogy of nature shows, that probably they will imagine they have strong objections against them. For so, prior to experience, they would think they had against the instruction afforded in the ordinary course of nature. For instance, it would have been thought incredible that men should have been so much more capable

of discovering, even to a certainty, the general laws of matter, and the magnitudes and revolutions of the heavenly bodies, than the cure of diseases, and many other things in which human life is so much more nearly concerned. The method of invention again, by which men discover things of the greatest moment in an instant, when perhaps they are thinking of something else, which they have in vain been searching after for years, would be thought most irregular and capricious. So likewise the imperfections attending the only method we have of communicating our thoughts to each other, language, would be judged utterly incredible. It is inadequate, ambiguous, liable to infinite abuse. Now no objections against the manner in which Christianity teaches in the Scriptures, are of greater weight than these, which analogy shows us to have really no force at all.

5. To apply these remarks to a particular instance. The abuse of miraculous powers is made an objection against their being really miracles; but we see in the natural course of things daily, that remarkable gifts of memory, eloquence, knowledge, are not al-

ways conferred on persons who use them with prudence and propriety.

6. Again, as in natural and civil knowledge, there are common and obvious rules of conduct, and parts requiring very exact thought; so, in Christianity the necessary matters of faith and practice are a plain and obvious thing; whilst many other parts demand careful investigation. And as natural knowledge is acquired by particular persons comparing and pursuing obscure hints dropped us by nature, as it were, accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance; so probably the entire scheme of Christianity in the Scriptures will only be gradually understood, by particular persons attending to intimations scattered up and down in it, and which most persons disregard. Nor is it incredible that a book so long known should contain many truths not yet completely discovered; for nature has been open to the investigation of man for many thousand years, and yet great discoveries are continually made.

7. And if men object against Christianity, that it is not universally known, we reply,

that many most valuable remedies for natural diseases were unknown for ages, and are known now but to few; that probably many are not known yet; that the application of them, when known, is difficult; that if used amiss, they often create new diseases; that they are often not effectual; and that the regimen required is often so disagreeable that men will not submit to it, but satisfy themselves with the excuse, that if they did submit, it is not certain they should be cured. These natural remedies are neither certain, perfect, nor universal; and the principles of arguing which would lead us to conclude they must be so, would not only be contrary to fact, but would also lead us to conclude that there would be no diseases at all. It is therefore not at all incredible that the like things should be found in the remedy for moral diseases, Christianity, if it proceeds from the same divine hand as natural remedies do.

Chap. IV. The objections against Christianity are thus merely what we might have expected. But further, these objections re-

ceive a full answer from the consideration that Christianity is a scheme imperfectly comprehended, in which a system of means is established, and which is carried on by general laws; just as objections against natural religion were shown to be thus silenced. For this shows that the things objected to may, in each case, not only be consistent with wisdom and goodness, but instances of them.

1. Now Christianity is a scheme quite beyond our comprehension. It is a mysterious economy, still carrying on for the recovery of the world by a divine person, the Messiah, who, after various preparatory dispensations, became incarnate, and died as a Sacrifice for sin. Parts likewise of this scheme are the miraculous and ordinary mission of the Holy Ghost, Christ's invisible government over his church, and his second advent to judgment. Now the Scriptures assert this to be a mystery; indeed, what is revealed of it, leaves so much unrevealed, that one cannot read a passage but what it runs up into something which shows us our ignorance about it; so that to all purposes of objecting, we know as little of it, as we know

of the vast scheme of the natural world, where every step shows us our ignorance, short-sightedness, and incompetence to judge.

2. In the Christian scheme, again, as in the course of nature, means which appear foolish, though they may possibly be the very best, are used to accomplish ends; and their appearing foolish is no presumption against them, in a scheme so greatly beyond our comprehension.

3. Christianity is also probably carried on by general laws. The course of nature is confessedly so; and yet we know but little of these general laws. We know not by what laws, storms, famine, pestilence, &c. destroy mankind; nor why men are born in such places and times, and with such talents; nor how it is that such and such trains of thought enter the mind. We therefore call these things accidental; though all reasonable men believe there is no such thing as accident. We see but a little way; and it is only from seeing that the part of the course of nature which is known to us, is governed by general laws, that we conclude the whole to be so governed, though the laws of innu-

merable things are unknown to us. In like manner, that miraculous powers should be exerted at such occasions, for such reasons, before such persons, under such circumstances, &c. may have been also by general laws though unknown to us, as the laws of the things above instanced in nature are unknown to us. And there is no more reason to expect that every exigency as it arises should be provided for by these general laws, than that every exigency in nature should.

4. In the next place, let us see the force of the common objection raised against the whole scheme of Christianity, as being what some are pleased to call a round-about way, a perplexed contrivance for the salvation of the world, as if God was reduced to the necessity of using a long series of intricate means to accomplish his ends. Now it is obvious, that in the course of nature God uses various means which we think tedious, to arrive at his ends. Indeed there is something in this matter quite beyond our comprehension: but the mystery is as great in nature as in Christianity. Perhaps many things which we call means, may be ends.

However, it is clear the whole natural world is a progressive system, in which the operation of means takes up a great length of time. One state of things is a preparation for another, and that state the means of attaining to another succeeding one. Men are for precipitating things; but God in the natural world appears ever deliberate, reaching his ends by slow steps. The change of seasons, the ripening the fruits of the earth, the growth of a flower, the gradual advances of vegetable and animal bodies, and the progress of knowledge in men with their growing faculties and powers, are instances of this. Thus in nature God operates as he does in Christianity, by making one thing subservient to another, through a series of means which extends backward and forward beyond our utmost view. Objections, therefore, against the whole plan of Christianity, as intricate and round-about, and perplexed, have no sort of force.

Chap. V. This general objection having been answered, let us next consider the par-

ticular one most urged, namely, that against the Mediation of Christ.

1. Now, in the first place, the visible government of God in nature is carried on by the instrumentality and mediation of others. Every comfort of life comes to us in this way. God appoints men as instruments, that is, mediators of good or evil to us. So that there is no presumption from analogy against the general notion of a Mediator.

2. In the next place, it is supposable and credible that the punishments which God inflicts as a moral governor, may be appointed to follow wickedness in the way of natural consequence; in a like manner as a man trifling upon a precipice, in the way of natural consequence falls down, and, without help, perishes.

3. But it is most important to remark, that, in the course of natural Providence, provision is made that all the natural bad consequences of men's actions should not always actually follow. We might, indeed, presumptuously have thought that the world would have been so constituted as that there should not have been any such thing as misery or evil.

But in fact we find that God permits it; but that he has provided at the same time relief, and in many cases perfect remedies for it, even for that evil which would have justly ended in our ruin. If, indeed, all the consequences of bad conduct had always followed, no one could have had a right to object; no one can say whether such a more severe constitution of things might not yet have been really good. But that, instead of this, provision is made by nature to remedy these consequences, may properly be called mercy or compassion in the original constitution of the world, as distinct from goodness in general. It is agreeable, then, to the whole analogy of nature, to hope that provision may have been made for remedying the natural consequences of vice in God's moral government, at least in some cases. There is a union of severity and indulgence in the course of nature; there may possibly also be a union of justice and compassion in the scheme of religion.

4. Some will wonder at this being made a question of; for they neglect and despise all ideas of future punishment. But as we

actually experience ill consequences from wickedness and folly here, so the analogy of the cases teaches us to apprehend worse evil consequences hereafter, from disorders committed by moral agents, presumptuously introducing confusion and misery into the kingdom of God, their Sovereign Creator. Nay, it is by no means intuitively certain whether these consequences could in the nature of the thing, be prevented, that is, consistently with the eternal rule of right. The utmost we could hope for is, that there would probably be some way in God's universal government for preventing the penal consequences of vice.

5. Further, it is not probable that any thing we could do of ourselves, would prevent these ill consequences. For sorrow and reformation will not of themselves prevent the natural consequences of our disorders here, and the assistance of others is often indispensable to such prevention. The like then may be the case under God's moral government. In fact, it is contrary to all our notions of government, as well as to the course of nature, to suppose that doing well

for the future, should always prevent or remedy the consequences annexed to disobedience. And though men in the present day boast of the efficacy of repentance, yet the prevalence of propitiatory sacrifices over the heathen world, shows that the general sense of mankind is against the idea of repentance being sufficient to expiate guilt.

6. In this darkness or light of nature, call it which you please, revelation comes in, teaches us our state of guilt, confirms every fear as to the future consequences of sin, declares that God's government will not pardon on mere repentance; but that still his government is compassionate, and that He has mercifully provided that there should be an interposition to prevent the utter ruin of man. *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish:* gave his Son in the same way of goodness to the world, as he affords to particular persons the friendly assistance of their fellow-creatures; when, without it, their temporal ruin would be the certain consequence of their follies; in the same way of goodness, I say, though in a transcendent and

infinitely higher degree. And the Son of God *loved us and gave himself for us*, with a love which he compares to that of human friendship; though in this case, all comparisons must fall infinitely short of the thing intended to be illustrated by them.

7. Now, if the constitution of things had been such that the whole creation must have perished, but for somewhat which God had appointed should take place to prevent that ruin, this supposition would not be inconsistent in any degree with perfect goodness and compassion, whatever men may object.

8. Nor can men object to the Scriptures as representing mankind by this whole scheme as in a degraded state; for it is not Christianity which has put us in this state; and all, even moralists, are compelled to acknowledge the extreme wickedness and misery which are in the world. And the crime of our first parents bringing us into a more disadvantageous condition, is particularly agreeable to all analogy.

9. The particular manner of Christ's mediation is by his becoming what the Scripture calls the *Prophet* of mankind, to declare

the Divine will; the *King*, by founding and governing a church; and the *High Priest*, by a propitiatory sacrifice; which sacrifice, be it well noted, is not spoken of merely in allusion to the Mosaic sacrifices, but as the original and great sacrifice itself, to which the Mosaic were themselves only allusions, and of which they were types. The Scriptures declare in all sorts of ways an efficacy in what Christ suffered for us, beyond mere example or instruction.

10. Further, as we know not by what means future punishment would have been inflicted on men, nor all the reasons why its infliction would have been needful, if it had not been prevented by Christ's sacrifice; it is most evident we are not judges, antecedently to revelation, whether a Mediator was or was not necessary to prevent that punishment; and upon the supposition of a Mediator, we are not judges beforehand of what it was fit to be assigned to him to do, nor of the whole nature of his office. To object, therefore, to any particular parts of this mediation, because we do not see the expedi-

ency of them is absurd. And yet men commonly do this.

11. Again; if men object to the satisfaction of Christ, that it represents God as indifferent whether he punishes the innocent or guilty, we answer, that they might equally object to the daily course of natural Providence, in which innocent people are continually forced to suffer for the faults of the guilty, and do suffer for them in various ways; whereas Christ's sufferings were undertaken by him voluntarily. And though upon the whole, and finally, every one shall receive according to his deserts, yet during the progress, and in order to the completion, of this moral scheme, punishments endured by the innocent in some way instead of the guilty, that is, vicarious punishments, may, for aught we know, be fit and absolutely necessary.

12. Besides, there is an apparent tendency in this method of our redemption by the sacrifice of Christ, to vindicate the authority of God's law, and deter men from sin.

13. Let not, then, such poor creatures as we are, object against an infinite scheme,

that we do not see the usefulness and necessity of all its parts. The presumption of this kind of objections seems almost lost in the folly of them.

14. It heightens the absurdity of these objections, that they are made against those parts of Christ's mediation which we are not actively concerned in. Now the whole analogy of nature teaches us not to expect the like information concerning the Divine conduct, as concerning our duty. The objections are made, as we have seen, to God's appointment of a Mediator, and to the Mediator's execution of his office; not to what is required of man in consequence of this gracious dispensation, which is plain and obvious, and which is all we need to know. Thus, in the natural world, it is almost an infinitely small part of natural Providence which men can understand, and yet they are sufficiently instructed for the common purposes of life.

Chap. VI. A principal objection against Christianity, further, is, that it is thought to rest on doubtful evidence, and that its benefits

are not universal; which, in other words, is as much as to say, that God would not have bestowed upon us any favour at all, unless in the degree which we imagine best, and that he could not bestow a favour upon any, unless he bestowed the same on all—an objection which the whole analogy of nature contradicts.

1. For how doubtful is the evidence on which men act in their most important concerns in this world—how difficult to balance nice probabilities, to make due allowances for accidents and disappointments, to see on which side the reasons preponderate. How often do strong objections lie against their schemes, objections which cannot be removed or answered, but yet which seem overbalanced by reasons on the other side. And how much are men deceived at last by the falsehood of others, by the false appearances of things, and the strong bias from within themselves to favour the deceit. And as to revelation not being universal, we see the Author of nature perpetually bestowing those gifts of health, prudence, knowledge, riches, upon some, which he does not on others. Yet,

notwithstanding these uncertainties and varieties, God does exercise a natural government over the world and there is such a thing as a prudent and imprudent course of conduct.

2. There have been different degrees of evidence to Jews and Christians. The first Christians had a higher evidence of miracles than we, and a stronger presumption in favour of Christianity from the lives of Christians: and we or future ages may have a higher evidence of the fulfilment of prophecy. And the Heathens, Mahommedans, Papists and Protestants, have now different degrees of evidence of natural and revealed religion, from the faintest glimmering of probability, to the clear light of truth and conviction: but all this most obviously resembles the constant order of Providence as to our temporal affairs. And we are to remember, that each one will be judged at last, by what he hath, and not by what he hath not, so that there is no shadow of injustice in this constitution of things, though what is the particular reason of it, we are altogether in the dark about. We know but little even of our own cases; scarcely any thing more than is just neces-

sary for practice. We are in the greatest ignorance as to what would satisfy our curiosity. We have only light to teach us our duty, and encourage us in the discharge of it.

3. Besides, if revelation were universal, men's different understandings, educations, tempers, bodily constitutions, lengths of lives, external advantages, would soon make their situation perhaps as widely different as it is at present.

4. But we may observe more particularly, that the evidence of religion not appearing certain, may be the especial trial of some men's characters and state of mind. Men may be as much in a state of probation with regard to the exercise of their understanding on the evidence of religion, as they are with regard to their conduct. The same inward principle which leads men to obey religion when convinced of its truth, would lead them to examine it, when they were first presented with its evidences. Negligence about such a serious matter as religion, is as criminal before distinct conviction, as careless practice is after. That religious evidence, then, is not forced upon men, nor intuitively true,

but left to be collected by a heedful attention to premises, may as much constitute religious probation as any thing else.

5. Again, even if Christianity should be supposed to be extremely doubtful to some persons, yet it puts them in a state of probation as to character. For if Christianity be once supposed by them to be possible, this demands religious suspense, moral resolution, self-government, inquiry, abstinence from what would be impediments, readiness to receive fresh light, care of what use they make of their influence and example upon others. For doubting is not a positive argument against religion, but for it; a doubt presupposes a lower degree of evidence, just as much as belief does a higher. And in proportion to the corruption of the heart, men acknowledge no evidence, however real, if it be not overbearing.

6. The difficulties which are said to be found in the evidence of Christianity, is no more a ground of complaint, than difficulties from external temptation as to the practice of it. Such speculative difficulties may, to persons of a deep sense, and reflecting minds,

and who have small temptations to gross outward sins, constitute the principal part of their trial. For we see, in the things of this world, that the chief trial of some men is not so much the doing what is right when it is known, as the attention, suspense, care, the being on their guard against false appearances, the weighing of contrary reasons, and informing themselves of what is really prudent.

7. In these remarks, we have taken it for granted that men are not neglecting the subject of religion altogether, nor entertaining prejudices against it. For if they never examine it in earnest, if they wish it not to be true, if they attend more to objections than to evidence, if they consider things with levity, if they indulge in ridicule, and put human errors in the place of Divine truth, all this will hinder men from seeing evidence, just as a like turn of mind hinders them from weighing evidence in their temporal capacities. And possibly the evidence of Christianity was left, so as that those who are desirous of evading moral obligation should not see it, whilst fair and candid persons should.

8. Further, the evidences of Christianity, as they are, may be sufficiently understood by common men, if they will only pay the same sort of attention to religion which they pay to their temporal affairs. But if men will handle objections which they have picked up, and discuss them without the necessary preparation of general knowledge, they must remain in ignorance or doubt, just as men who neglect the means of information in common life do.

9. But, perhaps, it will be said, that a prince would take care to give directions to a servant which would be impossible to be misunderstood or disputed. To this we answer, that it is certain we cannot argue thus as to God, because in point of fact he does not afford us such information as to our temporal affairs, as a matter of course, without care of our own. And if a prince wished not merely to have certain acts done, but also to prove the loyalty and obedience of his servant, he might not always give his directions in the plainest possible manner.

On the whole, the analogy of nature refutes all objections against Christianity as

resting upon doubtful evidence, and as not universal.

CHAP. VII. The objections against the particular scheme of Christianity being removed, it remains that we consider what the analogy of nature suggests as to the positive evidence for it, and as to the objections raised against that evidence.

Now, the evidence of Christianity embraces a long series of things, reaching from the beginning of the world to the present time, of great variety and compass, and making up one argument, the conviction arising from which is like what we call *effect* in architecture, a result from a great number of things, so and so disposed, and taken into one view; and this is the kind of proof on which we determine questions of difficulty, in our most important affairs in this world.

Let us then, 1st, consider the direct proof of Christianity, from Miracles and Prophecy; and then, 2d, the general argument arising from this proof, together with many collateral things, as making up one argument.

I.—1. The Scriptures of the Old and

New Testament afford us the same evidence of the miracles wrought in attestation of revelation, as it does of its ordinary history; for these miracles are not foisted into it, but form a part of it, and are related in the same unadorned manner as the rest of the narrative, and stand on the same footing of historical evidence. And some parts of Scripture, containing the account of miracles, are quoted as genuine from the very age in which they were said to have been written. And the establishment of the Jewish and Christian religions are just what might have been expected, if such miracles were wrought, and can be accounted for on no other supposition. The Scripture history, then, must be considered as genuine, unless something positive can be alleged to invalidate it. Mere guesses can prove nothing against historical evidence.

Further, the Epistles of St. Paul, being addressed to particular churches, carry in them a greater evidence of being genuine, than if they had been merely narratives addressed to the world at large. And the first epistle to the Corinthians is quoted by Clemens Romanus, a contemporary, in a letter

to the same church. And St. Paul mentions, in this epistle, the miraculous gifts, as possessed by the very Christians to whom he wrote; and he mentions them incidentally, and in order to depreciate them, and to reprove the abuse of them. He speaks of them in the manner any one would speak of a thing familiar, and known to the persons he is writing to. Against this evidence, general doubts have no force, because any fact of such a kind, and of such antiquity, may have general doubts thrown out concerning it, from the very nature of human affairs and human testimony.

Again, Christianity presented itself to mankind at first, and was received, on the footing of these miracles at the time when they were wrought; which is the case with no other religion. Mahommedanism was propagated by the sword; and Popish and Mahommedan miracles, said to be wrought after parties were formed, and when power and political interests supported them, are easily accounted for.

Once more, the reception of such a doctrine as Christianity, demanding such a total change of life, by such vast numbers, can

only be accounted for on the supposition of their belief in the Christian miracles, which they were fully competent to judge of, as matters of fact. For, credulous as mankind are, they are suspicious, and backward to believe and act against their prejudices, passions, and temporal interest; and education, prejudice, power, habits, laws, authority, were all then against Christianity.

Enthusiasm, indeed, may give rise to opinions, and to zeal in support of them. But there is a wide difference between opinions and facts; and testimony, though no proof of enthusiastic opinions, yet is allowed, in all cases, to be a proof of facts; and there is no appearance of enthusiasm in the conduct of the apostles and first Christians, but quite the contrary. And if great numbers of men of plain understandings affirm, that they saw and heard such and such things with their eyes and ears, such testimony is the strongest evidence we can have for any matter of fact. The mere vague charge of enthusiasm, in such a case, is frivolous.

However, as religion is supposed to be peculiarly liable to enthusiasm, let us observe

that prejudices, romance, affectation, humour, party spirit, custom, little competitions, &c. influence men in common matters, just as enthusiasm may do; and yet, human testimony, common matters, is believed and acted on notwithstanding. The fact is, mankind have undoubtedly a capacity of distinguishing truth and falsehood in common matters, and have a regard to truth in what they say, except when prejudiced, biassed, or deceived. And, therefore, human testimony remains a natural ground of assent, and this assent, a natural principle of action, notwithstanding all the error and dishonesty which are in the world. People, therefore, do not know what they say, when they pretend that enthusiasm destroys the evidence for the truth of Christianity. It never can be sufficient to overthrow direct historical testimony, indolently to say, Men are so apt to deceive and be deceived in religion, that we know not what to believe. All analogy shows, that men do not thus act in their temporal affairs.

Besides, the vast importance of Christianity, and the strong obligations to veracity which it enjoins, strengthen the presumption,

that the Apostles could not either intend to deceive others, or be deceived themselves. The proof from miracles, therefore, remains untouched; for there is no testimony whatever contradicting it, and strong historical testimony in its favour.

2. As to the evidence from prophecy, a few remarks may be made. If some parts of it are obscure, this does not lessen the proof of foresight from the fulfilment of those parts which are clear. Thus, in a writing, if part of it were in cyphers, and other parts in words at length, and if, in the parts understood, many known facts were related; no one would imagine, that if he could make out the part in cypher, he should find that the writer did not know the plain facts which he had related.

Again, if, from the deficiency in civil history, we cannot make out the minute fulfilment of every prophecy, yet a very strong proof of foresight may arise from a general completion of prophecy, as illustrated by civil history; perhaps as much proof as God intended should be afforded by such prophecy.

Further, if a long series of prophecy is

naturally applicable to such and such events, this is, of itself, a presumptive proof that it was intended of them. Thus, in mythological and satirical writings, we conclude that we understand their concealed meaning, in proportion to the number of particulars clearly applicable in such and such a manner.

Add to this, that the Jews applied the prophecies of Christ to the Messiah before his coming, in much the same manner as Christians do now; and the primitive Christians, those of the state of the church, and of the world, in the last ages, in much the same way as we do now, and as the event seems to verify. This is important.

Nor is it any argument against all this, if we suppose the prophets to have applied some of those prophecies, at the time, to other immediate events; for they were only amanuenses, not the original authors of their predictions; that is, they merely wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Thus, the argument from prophecy has great weight, though we should not be able to satisfy ourselves on every point. It is, indeed, very easy to determine at once with a

decisive air, and say, There is nothing in it: and this suits the presumption and wilfulness of men. But the true proof of modesty and fairness is to say, There is certainly something in it; and it shall have influence upon us in proportion to its apparent reality and weight. And this all analogy suggests to be the reasonable course.

II. Let us now consider this direct evidence of miracles and prophecy, in connexion with those circumstantial and collateral proofs, which go to make up one argument. For thus, in daily life, we judge of things by evidence arising from various coincidences, which confirm each other. And though each of these things, separately, may have little weight, yet when they are considered together, and united in one view, they may have the greatest. The proof of revelation is not some direct and express things only, but a great variety of circumstantial things also, in the result of which the proper force of the evidence consists.

1. Now revelation may be considered as wholly historical; for prophecy is anticipated history, and doctrines, and precepts, may be

viewed as matters of fact. The general design of this history, is to give us an account of the world, in this one single view, as God's world; and by this it is essentially distinguished from all other books. After the history of the creation, it gives an account of the world in this view, during that state of apostacy and wickedness which it represents mankind to lie in. It considers the common affairs of men, as a scene of distraction, and only refers to them as they affect religion.

2. This narrative, comprehending a period of nearly 6000 years, gives the utmost scope for objections against it; from reason, common history, or any inconsistency in its parts. And undoubtedly it must, and would have been confuted, if it had been false, as all false religions have been over and over again; and, therefore, that it has not been confuted, nor pretended to have been confuted, during the lapse of so many ages, implies a positive argument that it is true.

3. Further, the Scriptures contain a particular history of the Jews, God's peculiar people—the promises of the Messiah, as a Saviour for Jews and Gentiles—the narra-

tive of the birth of this Messiah, at the time foretold—and of the propagation of his religion—and of his being rejected by the Jewish people.

4. Let us now suppose a person to read the Scriptures thoroughly, and remark these and other historical facts contained in them, without knowing whether it was a real revelation from Heaven or not. Then let this person be told to look out into the world, and observe if the state of things seem at all to correspond with these facts. Let him be informed how much of natural religion was owing to this book, and how many nations received it as divine, and under what circumstances. Then let him consider of what importance religion is to mankind; and he would see that this supposed revelation having had this influence, and having been received in the world as it was, is the most conspicuous event in the history of mankind; and that a book thus recommended demands his attention as by a voice from Heaven.

5. Let such a person be next informed, that the history and chronology of this book is not contradicted, but confirmed, by pro-

fane history—that the narrative contains all the internal marks of truth and simplicity—and that the New Testament in particular, is confirmed in all its chief facts by heathen authors—and that this credibility of the common history in Scripture, gives some credibility to its miracles, as they are interwoven and make up one narrative.

6. Let him next be told that there was such a nation as the Jews, whose existence depended on the law said, in this book, to have been given them by Moses—that at the time when the prophecies had led this people to expect the Messiah, one claiming to be the Messiah appeared, and was rejected by them, as foretold—that the religion was received by the Gentiles on the authority of miracles, and that the Jews remain as a separate people to this present day, which seems to look forward to other prophecies of their future conversion.

Let him, I say, first gather his knowledge entirely from Scripture, and then compare it fact by fact with the corresponding history of the world; and the joint view must appear to him most surprising.

7. All these points make up an argument from their united, not separated, force. Then add to these, the appearances of the world, as answering still to the prophetic history, and numerous other particulars, and the result of the whole must be allowed to be of the greatest weight.

8. Then we should remember, that a mistake in rejecting Christianity, is much more dangerous in its consequences, than one in favour of it; and that in temporal affairs, we always consider which side is most safe.

9. We should also bear in mind that the truth of Christianity is proved, like that of any common event, not only if any one of the points adduced clearly imply it, but if the whole taken together do, though no one singly should. No one who is serious, can possibly think these things to be of little weight, if he considers the importance of collateral things, and less circumstances, in the evidence of probability, as distinguished in nature from the evidence of demonstration.

10. It should be just observed, that the nature of this evidence gives a great advantage to persons who choose to attack Chris-

tianity in a short, lively manner in conversation; because an objection against particular points is easily shown, whereas the united force of the whole argument, requires much time and thought.

CHAP. VIII. Lastly, some persons may object to this whole argument, from the analogy of nature, and say, it is a poor thing to solve difficulties in revelation, by asserting that there are like difficulties in natural religion.

1. Now men's wanting to have all difficulties cleared in revelation, is the same for any thing they know, as requiring to comprehend the divine nature. And it is no otherwise a poor thing to argue from natural to revealed religion, than it is a poor thing for a physician to have so little knowledge in the cure of diseases; which is yet much better than having no skill at all. Indeed, the epithet *poor*, may be applied as properly to the whole of human life.

Further, it is unreasonable for men to urge objections against Christianity which are of equal weight, against natural religion,

whilst they profess to admit the truth of natural religion. This is unfair dealing.

2. But again, religion is a practical thing, and if men have the like reason to believe the truth of it, as they have in what they do in their temporal affairs, then they are so much the more bound to act on it, as the interest is infinitely greater. This is plainly unanswerable. If they believe that taking care of their temporal interest will be for their advantage, then there is equal reason for believing, that obeying Christianity, and taking care of their future interests, will be for their advantage. It is according to the conduct and character of the Author of nature, that we should act upon such probable evidence. All analogy clearly shows this.

3. The design of the analogical argument is not to vindicate the character of God, but to show the obligations of men. Nor is it necessary to prove the reasonableness of every thing enjoined us in Christianity; the reasonableness of the practice of our duty is enough. And though analogy does not pretend immediately to answer objections against the wisdom and goodness of the doctrines

and precepts of Christianity, yet it does this indirectly, by showing that the things objected against are not incredible.

4. It is readily acknowledged, that this treatise is not what is called satisfactory—very far from it—but then no natural institution of life would appear so, if reduced into a system together with its proof. The unsatisfactory evidence with which we put up in common life, is not to be expressed. Yet men do not throw away life on account of this doubtfulness. And religion pre-supposes, in all who would embrace it, some integrity and honesty, a willingness to follow the probability of things; just as speaking to a man supposes him to understand the language in which you speak. The question then is, not whether the evidence of Christianity be what is called satisfactory, but whether it be sufficient to prove and discipline that virtue and integrity of mind, which it pre-supposes, though it be not sufficient to remove every objection, or gratify curiosity.

5. As to the little influence which this whole argument may actually have on men, which is made an objection to it, the true

question is, not how men will actually behave, but how they ought to behave. It is no objection to this argument, that it may fail of convincing men. Religion as a probation, has its end on all to whom it has been proposed with sufficient evidence, let them behave as they will concerning it.

On the whole, the proof of Christianity is greatly strengthened by these considerations from analogy; though it is easy to cavil at them, and to object that they are not demonstrative, which it was never pretended they were, nor could be. They are of the nature of probable arguments; but then they are so forcible and just, that it is impossible to answer them, or evade them fairly.

Conclusion. In this treatise we have considered Christianity as a matter of fact merely, and have argued with unbelievers on their own ground. We have, therefore, neither argued from the liberty of man, nor from the moral fitness of things; both of which would have strengthened my argument, and both of which we believe to be true. But we have taken up things on the

lowest ground, and given every advantage we could to our adversary.

In the first part, a view has been given of natural religion, and the chief difficulties concerning this have been answered by the analogy of God's government of the universe. Thus, the objections against a future life of moral and righteous retribution, wherein God will reward or punish men according to their behaviour here, and for which this world is a state of discipline and preparation, have been silenced, or refuted; and the general notion of religion has been shown to be throughout agreeable to the obvious course of things in this present world.

For, indeed, natural religion carries in it much evidence of truth, on barely being proposed to our thoughts. To an unprejudiced mind, ten thousand thousand instances of design, cannot but prove a Designer. And it is intuitively manifest, that creatures ought to live under a dutiful sense of their Maker; and that justice and charity must be his laws, to creatures such as we are, whom he has formed social, and placed in society. The neglect, therefore, of men towards it, must

arise from objections against all religion generally; which objections have been met in the first part of this work. Natural religion has been there cleared of its difficulties, and its credibility shown.

In the second part, the particular scheme of Christianity has been considered; and the objections against its importance, against the miracles on which its evidence rests, and against its provision of a Mediator, have been proved to be invalid. The difficulties raised concerning it, because it is not universal, and because its evidence is not overbearing, have also been removed. Some observations have, lastly, been made on the objections to the special evidences of Christianity; as consisting of miracles, prophecies, and a great many other collateral circumstances, united in one argument.

Thus we have endeavoured to strengthen the evidences of Christianity to those who believe it to be true; and to show its probability to those who do not believe it. The treatise is especially addressed to those who imagine that the evidences of natural and revealed religion, if true, would have been

stronger than they are, or irresistible; and who think that doubting about Christianity, is in a manner the same thing as being certain against it. If these persons are not willing to weigh seriously the force of the analogical arguments we have produced, but will still go on to disregard and vilify Christianity, there is no reason to think they would alter their behaviour to any purpose; though there were a demonstration, instead of what there is, a high probability, and moral certainty of its truth.

Such are the chief steps in the reasoning of Bishop Butler, in this great work.

CONNEXION OF BISHOP BUTLER'S ARGUMENT WITH OTHER BRANCHES OF EVIDENCE,—THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Having thus given a general draught of the main argument, as well as of the particular reasoning of the Analogy, we come to the second general division of this Essay, and offer, as was proposed, some observations on THE CONNEXION OF THIS ARGUMENT WITH THE OTHER BRANCHES OF THE CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE, AND ON ITS PECULIAR USE AND IMPORTANCE; AND ALSO ON OUR AUTHOR'S

VIEW OF PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY, AND ON THE ADAPTATION OF HIS ARGUMENT TO THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION IN ALL ITS EXTENT.

1. We begin with *the connexion of the Analogical argument with the other branches of the Christian evidence, and on its peculiar use and importance.* For the argument from analogy does not stand alone. It is rather the completion, and, as it were, the crown of all the other evidences for the truth of Christianity. It comes in to remove objections after the usual proofs have been admitted. For the EXTERNAL, the INTERNAL, and what I may call the ANALOGICAL evidences of Christianity, are three distinct divisions of one great argument. The EXTERNAL EVIDENCES are those which should be first studied. Indeed they are the only ones that can be considered in the first instance as essential; because they undertake to show the credentials of the messenger who professes to come with a revelation from heaven. Christianity claims a divine origin. I have therefore a right, indeed I am bound, soberly and impartially to inquire what proofs she brings of this high claim. And when she refers me to the holy

Scriptures as containing all her records, I have a right to ask what evidence there is of the genuineness and authenticity of these books, and what footing they place the religion upon, which they wish to inculcate on mankind. The answer to all these questions is found in what we call the External Evidences of Christianity. These show the acknowledged facts on which the religion rests. They prove that the books were written by the persons whose names they bear, and do contain a true and credible history. They prove that the revelation itself was founded on unequivocal and numerous miracles; that it was accompanied (as it is accompanied still) with the distinct fulfilment of an amazing scheme of prophecy, embracing all the chief events of the world; and that it was propagated in the face of opposition and difficulty with a triumphant success, which nothing but the hand of God could have effected. These evidences also show the positive good effects produced by this heavenly doctrine, and which are still being produced, in the melioration of society and the advancement of human happiness and virtue in all the nations

where it has been received. We have no right to go further than this in the first place. The moment the messenger is sufficiently proved to have divine credentials, we have but one duty left, that of receiving and obeying his message, that of reading and meditating on the revelation itself, in order to conform ourselves to it with devout and cheerful submission. We have no right at all to examine the nature of the discoveries, or doctrines, or precepts of Christianity, with the view of determining whether they seem to us becoming the wisdom of God, and agreeable to the reason of man. It is proved that the revelation is from heaven. This is enough. The infinitely glorious Creator and Sovereign of the universe has full power to do what he will with his own, and to lay down laws for his creatures. We have no business, strictly speaking, with the contents and tenor of these laws, except to understand them and obey them.

Great mischief has been done to the Christian cause by taking another method. Men have allowed themselves to be entangled with discussions on the possibility and credibility

of a revelation being given to man, on the nature and tendency of the Christian doctrine, on the reasonableness of its particular injunctions — questions every one of them out of place in examining the evidence of a divine religion. Let it fairly be made out to come from God, and it is enough. More than this is injurious. We are sure, indeed, that the contents of it must be most worthy of its perfect Author; but we are no adequate judges of what is worthy or what is not worthy of an Infinite being. We have no right to call the Almighty Creator to the bar of our feeble reason, and suspend obedience to his commands on the determination whether those commands are in our opinion just and good or not. To receive a revelation on the ground of its proper credentials, and then to trace out with reverence the wisdom and goodness of its contents, is one thing; but to sit in judgment on those contents previously to an examination of its credentials, and in order to decide whether we shall receive the professed revelation or not, is quite another. We are competent to understand the simple and commanding language of the Almighty,

attesting by miracles and prophecy, and the extraordinary propagation of the gospel and its visible good effects on mankind, the truth of a supernatural revelation; and yet are no competent judges whatever of the particular things the Almighty may see fit to communicate in that revelation. Evidences are level to a candid and fair understanding; divine doctrines may not be so. Evidences are addressed to man's reason, and warrant the modest exercise of it; doctrines are addressed to faith, and demand not discussion, but obedience.

The danger of acting in the way which I am now venturing to condemn, is greater, because the door being once opened to such reasoning, it is quite certain that the minds of men will too often employ it amiss. The infidel is the person just the least capable to act aright in such a case. The pious well-trained judgment of a sincere Christian, might indeed form a better estimate of the internal character of a revelation from heaven: but the unsubdued mind of an unbeliever can only come to a wrong decision upon it. He wants all the preparation necessary.

But although the External proofs of Christianity are thus all that, in the first examination, is required, yet the INTERNAL EVIDENCES may afterwards be profitably, most profitably studied. Christianity shrinks from no scrutiny. She courts the light. When the outward credentials of the heavenly messenger have once been investigated, and the message been received on this its proper footing; then if it be asked, whether the contents of the revelation seem to confirm the proof of its divine original; whether the sincere believer will find them adapted to his wants; whether the morals inculcated, the end proposed, the means enjoined are agreeable to man's best reason and the dictates of an enlightened understanding and conscience, whether the character of Christ be worthy of his religion, whether the influence of grace, said to accompany Christianity, may be obtained by prayer, whether the lives and deaths of Christians as compared with those of professed Infidels, illustrate the excellency of their faith; whether, in short, the promises and blessings of Christianity are verified in those who make a trial of them, by submit-

ting to the means appointed for their attainment: when such questions are put with candour, by those who have embraced Christianity, we answer them by referring to the Internal evidences of Revelation. These Internal evidences are now our appropriate study. They show us the adaptation of the religion to the situation and wants of man, the purity and sublimity of its doctrines and precepts, the character of its founder, the sanctifying and consoling effect of the influence which accompanies it, the holy lives and happy deaths of its genuine followers, and the trial which every one may make of its promises and blessings, by fulfilling the terms on which they are proposed. Each of these topics admits of large illustration. The whole of the Internal evidences form an argument in favour of Christianity, as complete and satisfactory in its particular province, as the whole of the External. Indeed, they are, in some respects, more persuasive, though they come after them and are secondary to them. The External evidences enforce conviction, the Internal induce to love. The External bring to light the potent remedy,

the Internal apply it to the sufferer, and produce the actual cure. The first require an exercise of the understanding on plain facts stated, the second the submission of the affections to a benefit conferred. By the one we know religion to be true, by the other we feel it to be good. The External evidences awaken attention to a new doctrine, the Internal attract the heart to an incalculable blessing.

Accordingly, no class of persons is excluded from that conviction of the truth of Christianity which springs from a perception of its effects in themselves and others. The External evidences indeed are simple as they are majestic; but to the unpractised and uneducated mind, they necessarily lose much of their force. The great body of mankind must be indebted to their instructers in a large measure, for their faith in the historical evidences of religion; but they can feel it in its sacred fruits as keenly, and perhaps even more keenly, than any other description of persons. They are incapable of following a train of reasoning, or of judging of distant and remote facts; but they are quite capable

of perceiving the blessedness of obeying Christianity, and of relying on its promises. Thus a source of faith is opened to them, abundant in proportion as they advance in piety and virtue. And though, as we have already observed, the unbeliever has no right to sit in judgment on the internal character of Christianity, but should, and must, in all reason, be contented at first with the proper external evidences that it really comes from God; yet when he has once received the Christian doctrine aright, and has begun to be moulded into its form, and take its impression, he will discover to his surprise new traces of a divine hand daily in all its parts, he will feel that it is salutary in all its doctrines and in all its precepts, in all its bearings and all its tendencies, in all its discoveries and declarations, in all its effects and fruits. Like the light of the sun, it will speak its author and source. The confirmation which the faith of the sincere believer thus receives is indescribable. He has now entered the temple, of which he had before surveyed, from without, the proportions and magnificence. He has now partaken of the feast, of which he had

before heard the tidings and listened to the invitation. He has now experienced the skill and tenderness of the Physician, of whose fame and powers he had before been convinced only by testimony. He has now shared the unspeakable gift which had before been offered to him. He was well persuaded, on first embracing Christianity on its due external authority, that every thing taught by it would be found most agreeable to the attributes and glory of its divine author. But he has now a conviction resulting from the benefits conferred, of a kind higher in its degree, and more consoling in its effects, than any external proof could communicate, and which, though incapable of being known, from the nature of the case, previously to experience, yet when once known, sways and bears away the heart.

The two branches of evidence thus concurring to one result, the External proving the truth of the messenger, and the Internal confirming afterwards that truth by an experience of the excellency and suitableness of the message itself, the Christian believer has

a continually growing conviction of the firm grounds of his faith.

He is now prepared for considering, to the best advantage, the third branch of the evidences in favour of Christianity — that arising from THE ANALOGY BETWEEN THIS RELIGION, AND THE CONSTITUTION AND COURSE OF NATURE. This brings us to the immediate subject of Butler's treatise, of which we have already given a review. We have no right, indeed, (for the idea is too important not to be repeated,) to call for this species of proof, any more than we have a right to call, in the first instance, for an examination of the internal character of Christianity, or rather to call for it at all. All we have any fair right to ask for, is the credentials of the ambassador who professes to come to us in the name of our absent, though ever-present, Sovereign and Lord. It is perfectly true, that the analogy of nature, as formed by the same hand, will have traces of the same system and scheme of Christianity, just as it is true, that a revelation from heaven will possess every internal mark of holiness and goodness and truth; but we have no right to stop,

and pretend to follow out all these matters, before we receive the Christian doctrine as divine. Christianity does not submit to plead at such a bar. The capacity of receiving advantage from these auxiliary evidences, depends on our first admitting, on the plain grounds of its miracles, and prophecies, and propagation, and mighty effects, the truth of the revelation by which these additional proofs are to be created and communicated, and without which they cannot be employed to any purpose.

Still, after we have sincerely embraced the gospel, we may humbly inquire, whether the difficulties which are raised against it by unbelievers, or which occur to our own minds, may be relieved by an appeal to the works of God in nature, and His order and government therein. This is the argument from Analogy, which rises still a step above the two preceding branches of the subject, not as in itself necessary to the first reception of Christianity, but as furnishing the subsequent confirmation of it, and removing scruples and objections arising from the ignorance and presumption of man. It is, indeed, a glorious

thing thus to discern the harmony between Christianity, the greatest of the Almighty's works, and all the other known productions of the same divine Architect. To see that the natural and moral government of God are parts of one stupendous whole, sums up, and finishes, and absolves the subject. Nothing more can be said. All is, what we might be sure it would be, complete and adequate. The force of External evidences is to compel assent; the effect of the Internal to produce love; the chief efficacy of the Analogical to silence objections. By the first, a message is proved to come from heaven; by the second, the salutary effects of this message are felt and understood; by the third, it is shown to be, in itself, most agreeable to all the known dispensations of the divine Author. The first is the proper evidence which such a case indispensably demands; the next confirms, by actual experience, this satisfactory ground of belief; the last excludes all contradictory assertions, and creates a silence and repose of mind, when objections are urged by others, or arise in our own thoughts. External evidences, by their simple majesty,

address the reason of mankind, and overwhelm objections and surmises; Internal, by the influences of truth on the heart, indispose men to listen to those objections; Analogical, by showing that such objections lie equally against the constitution and course of nature, deprive them of all their force, and turn them into proofs of divine goodness and power.

In thus assigning to the three branches of evidence a particular position, we are far from insinuating that they may not be considered in a different order. We merely wish to claim for the external evidences the rank to which they are entitled in fair argument, and to protest against the additional and auxiliary evidences being improperly resorted to, in the first instance, to the neglect of the palpable credentials of the Christian message. To maintain this is a matter of real moment. It places the various branches of the inquiry in their true and natural light. Still we object not to any part of them being separately considered, according to the disposition, age, talents, information, and circumstances of men. The Christian evidence in each division, and each subdivision of it,

is so clear and convincing to a fair and sincere inquirer, as to admit of a distinct discussion and exhibition, if it be conducted with good faith. But if men wish to seize what seems to them a feeble part of the Internal or Analogical argument, and press this out of its place, disregarding the plain and direct proofs of Christianity from miracles, prophecy, &c. we then recall them to the consideration of the real state of the argument. We tell them they are no adequate judges of what a divine revelation should contain. We appeal to the proper and unanswerable proofs of a divine religion, in the extraordinary manifestations of Almighty God in its favour. And we bid them postpone the examination of the subsidiary evidences, till they have weighed the primary ones, and received the religion which they attest. Thus to a serious candid mind, we are willing to open at once any part of the wide subject of the evidences of Christianity; whilst to a captious and unreasonable inquirer, we propose the strict rules of debate, and demand the orderly examination of the credentials of the religion.

If, however, after all, men will unreasonably demand an exposition of the internal character of Christianity in the first place, or will dwell on objections raised against its particular constitution, we descend on the ground they have chosen, and without relinquishing our right to assume a higher position and to insist only on the direct proofs of it, we meet them where they stand, and show them the inward excellency of our religion from the Internal evidences, or the weakness and inconclusiveness of their objections from the Analogical. Thus Christianity stoops, so far as it can, to the fancies of men, and argues with them on their own principles. This is particularly the case with the evidence from analogy.

It is indeed one of the most valuable branches of the whole Christian argument, because objections are the ground commonly taken by unbelievers. For weak, and inconclusive, as these objections are, they are sufficient, when listened to, to steel the heart against the force of truth, and bar up the first entrance to the Christian doctrine. The young and inexperienced are thus gradually

seduced and hardened. It is not that men have found out that the External Evidences of Christianity are insufficient, for they have never studied them—it is not that they have discovered the fallacy of the Internal Evidences, for they have never been in a situation to judge of them. But they have heard bold things flippantly said against Christianity; things which they were not sufficiently informed on the subject to answer; these have sunk into their memories, and acquired force by lapse of time; and thus their minds became gradually tainted and poisoned. Their passions, impatient of the restraints of Christianity, aided the delusion. Their pride of intellect, ambitious of forsaking the common track, listened to the flattering tale. The opinions and example of others, as little competent to judge as themselves, attracted them onwards. Ridicule, unanswerable ridicule, came in to their overthrow. The love of novelty was not without its force. They had no inclination to the patient inquiry which such a subject as religion demands; whereas an objection was seized at once. Thus, insensibly, the impressions of a pious education

were effaced, and the unhappy youth entered on the mazes of infidelity, and came, at last, to scoff at the very religion which he once reverenced, if he did not obey.

Here, then, the argument from analogy may be of the greatest service. We insist not with such a youth, on an examination of the External Evidences of religion, to which we see he would not attend, and we come at once to his objections. We show him, in the manner of the preceding treatise, that we may well expect to find the same sort of character in a revelation, proceeding from the Author of nature, as is found in the constitution and order of nature itself; that our ignorance, with respect to natural things, is such, that we cannot go on a single step, except as facts and experiments lead us by the hand; and, that as this ignorance is the proper answer to presumptions and difficulties, derived from our opinion of things beforehand, so is this much more the case in religion, where we find only the same kind of difficulties which meet us perpetually in the works of the same hand in the course of nature. So that, in short, he that rejects Christianity, on

account of these difficulties, may for the very same reason, deny the world to have been formed by an intelligent Creator. Thus all objections against the Scriptures, drawn from what is similar or analogous in the order of the world, which is acknowledged by the objector himself to proceed from an Almighty Governor, are satisfactorily silenced; and the mind, freed from harassing and frivolous objections, is at liberty to weigh impartially the direct proof of Christianity, and then to seek the best confirmation of a wavering faith, in its salutary effects in pardoning guilt, tranquilizing conscience, subduing pride, regulating the affections and appetites, and changing the whole character from that of a discontented, captious, selfish creature, to that of a patient, docile, thankful, benevolent one.

Thus all the several branches of the Evidences of Christianity are ultimately studied, though not in the order which the strict rules of the case would lay down. The great object is gained if the unbeliever is convinced: but if, on the contrary, he refuses to listen to our argument from analogy, or professes himself dissatisfied with it, we are still at liberty

to remind him, that the only proofs which he can claim in the first instance, are the direct and proper credentials of miracles and prophecy, and other External Evidences; and that his paramount duty is to submit to the revelation thus attested, and not yield to objections and difficulties resting on mere conceptions and opinions.

But the use and importance of the argument from analogy may be frequently observed in the case of the sincere Christian. How often is the thoughtful believer harassed by objections. The best men are still weak and defective; and notwithstanding the clearest deductions of reason, and the avowed subjection of the heart to the Gospel, doubts, and embarrassments, and apprehensions, will haunt the mind. There are few who have not felt this. The imagination roves on forbidden topics—thoughts the most unwelcome intrude—arguments fail to satisfy—exploded objections recur. Especially if circumstances require a Christian to treat with infidels, and examine and refute their arguments, the infirmity of his faith will sometimes be an occasion of surprise and distress to him. In

such seasons, no source of relief is more plenteous than that springing from the clear and striking similarity between the objections raised against revelation, and those which may be raised against the government and order of God in natural providence. When the External and Internal Evidences of Christianity seem cold, and ineffective, and barren, the Analogical precisely meet his feelings. The full and adequate repose which they inspire, is a calm after a storm. The relief is more sensible from being unexpected. For, somehow or other, the mind, at times, appears quite hedged in with fears and speculations. The state of misery in which the world lies—the prevalence of moral evil—the immense majority of the human race, sunk in Pagan ignorance—the trials of good men—the prosperity of the wicked—the slow progress of truth and reason; these, and a thousand like matters, perplex, too frequently, the benevolent and reflecting mind of the Christian. He is quite astonished that an all-wise and all-gracious Creator should leave a revelation with so little efficacy attending it. He thinks that he can never ob-

tain satisfaction upon these questions. He has forgotten the arguments which formerly silenced his scruples, and his faith is ready to fail him. The analogical argument then occurs to his distracted thoughts—he reads it as if he had never read it before—it seems new, forcible, conclusive—his proud reasonings sink—faith resumes her sway—humility acknowledges the ignorance and littleness of man, before the incomprehensible plans of the infinite God—his state of probation and discipline, forces itself upon his notice—the traces of the same divine Governor, in the natural and moral world, are again seen and recognized—and the satisfaction he thus regains is more than can be expressed. In proportion as the difficulties appeared insuperable, is the removal of them consoling and vivifying.

There is this further to be noticed, as to the importance of the argument from analogy, that it is capable of indefinite ramification. The fruitfulness of it is such, that each Christian, throughout the whole course of life, may multiply his observations without exhausting the inquiry. There is an inherent freshness and life in it, which makes it always new and interesting.

Indeed, we must observe, before we quit this topic, that the VARIETY of the Christian argument generally, is one striking confirmation of its truth. The evidences for revelation may be truly said to be diversified, and extensive beyond any thing that could have been conceived, we do not say, on a like subject, but on any subject whatever. If a man were allowed to point out beforehand, the proofs of a divine religion to be addressed to a reasonable and accountable being, he could not name any different in kind from those which we possess. For what could a man demand, but either the conspicuous display of a clearly miraculous power in attestation of it, or the incontrovertible fulfilment of prophecy—or the triumphant and supernatural spread of the doctrine itself—or the visible and mighty effects on all who receive it? And where the revelation is admitted and obeyed, what internal confirmation of its truth could he desire, beyond the adaptation of it to the state and wants of man—the purity and sublimity of its doctrines and precepts—the untainted benevolence of its founder—the attendant influence of grace—and

the actual accomplishment of its promises to all who apply duly for them? And if objections be afterwards raised against this scheme, what could he wish further, than to see them extinguished by considerations derived from the ignorance of man, and the incomprehensibility of God? In this diversity of proof all the attributes of the Almighty are pledged, as it were, to the sincere believer. The miracles give him the pledge of the sovereign power of God—the prophecies, of his Omniscience—the supernatural propagation of the Gospel, of his supreme providence—the effects produced, of his fidelity—the adaptation to the state of man, of his wisdom—the purity of the doctrine and morals, of his holiness—the character of Christ, of his condescension—the accompanying influence, of his grace and goodness—the fulfilment of the promises, of his veracity. Thus the evidences of Christianity have an impression of the divine glory irradiating them.*

* We are indebted for some thoughts in this part of the Essay, to Mr. Davidson's admirable Warburtonian Lectures—a work of deep research, and full of fine reflections; especially on the structure of prophecy.

But it is not merely the diversity of these topics, but the DISSIMILARITY of them from each other, which gives them their incomparable weight. They are not all of a kind. The impostor who could be imagined to feign one branch of them, would be incapacitated by that very attempt from feigning the rest. They would each demand a separate scheme, distinct powers, a new reach of intellect, different combinations. The independence of these different evidences upon each other, indescribably augments their force. In fact, the annals of mankind never exhibited such a religion as Christianity surrounded with her credentials, nor any thing like it. The systems of Heathenism and Mahommedanism reflect a glory on revelation by the contrast which they exhibit in these respects, as well as in every other.

And yet the SIMPLICITY of these different evidences of our religion is as remarkable as their number and diversity. For they are level to every understanding. They address themselves to the faculty of judgment with which we are endowed. The reader of history, the student of nature, the scholar, the

contemplative philosopher, the uneducated inquirer, the candid mind of every class, may find obvious and satisfactory proofs adapted to his habits and capacities. If there is no bad faith, every one that investigates this great question, will find the satisfaction he seeks for.

We only observe, further, that the proper force and strength of these evidences, lies in the UNION of all the parts of the argument. This Bishop Butler has pointed out, chiefly in respect of the analogical argument; but it is important to be applied to the entire subject. One point may more forcibly strike the conviction of one inquirer, and another point of another; a separate argument may be weakly stated by the Christian advocate; mistakes may be made in deducing a particular historical proof, or alleging a particular fact. But the cause of Christianity does not rest on any one division of the subject, but on the whole. Each separate branch is, indeed, firm enough to sustain the entire edifice; but we are not allowed to let it rest there. We must remind the sincere inquirer that it is the combined effect of the various

topics, which he is called on to observe. And if this be done, we fear not to assert that no such inquirer shall fail of all the satisfaction which a moral certainty can produce. The infidel attacks Christianity generally on some single isolated point of evidence; and if he can contrive to obscure the brightness of this, triumphs as if he had proved the religion to be fictitious. And not only so, but if he can only raise a doubt about the truth of this single, and perhaps subordinate point, he turns this doubt into what he calls a positive argument against Christianity. But this is unfair and disingenuous. Christianity reposes on the entire structure of her evidences —a structure which has never, as yet, been fairly assailed, much less weakened or destroyed; and which rears its front in undiminished stability and glory, mocking at its feeble and discomfited opponents.

Having thus given a view of the connexion of the Analogical argument, with the other branches of the Christian evidence, and

of its particular use and importance, we now proceed, 2dly, *To offer some remarks on Butler's particular view of Christianity, and on the adaptation of his argument to practical religion in all its extent.*

For the reader will have observed, that the great argument of the analogy is designed rather to silence objections, than to expound or defend the minute and interior topics of Christianity, on which the life and influence of piety, as a practical principle, very much depend. Indeed the end of all treatises on the Evidences of religion, must be the establishment of the truth of it generally, and not the particular development of its parts. Such treatises meet the unbeliever, as much as possible on his own ground, and attempt to gain his assent to the credentials of the divine doctrine, leaving the details of that doctrine to the ordinary teachers of Christianity, or the various practical works, which treat professedly of them. The general features, therefore, of the Christian religion are all that it falls within the province of the writer on Evidences to delineate fully; taking care that

his allusions to the inward grace and power of it be calculated to lead the reader on to adequate views of the whole. These features Bishop Butler has seized with a master's eye. The moral government of God by rewards and punishments, the state of discipline which this world is for a future one; the corruption of man, the guilt of sin, the mediation of Christ, the propitiatory Sacrifice of his death, and his invisible government of his church; the assistance and grace of the Holy Spirit; the second advent of our Lord to judgment; the seriousness of mind which the subject of religion demands—these commanding truths are the first elements and characteristics of Christianity, and are nobly defended and cleared from objections by our Author.

At the same time, it cannot, and need not be concealed, that the occasional hints which fall from him, on the particular grace of the Christian religion, and its operation on the heart, are far from being so explicit. His references to the precise nature of our justification before God—to the extent of the fall and ruin of man by sin—to the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration and sanctification

—and to the consolatory, cheering, vivifying effects of peace of conscience, and communion with God, and hope of rest and joy in heaven, do not correspond with the largeness of the case. They are partial and defective. They might and should have embraced, incidentally at least, some intimations of the peculiar structure and design of spiritual religion. The powerful argument in hand should at times have been carried out to its consequences. The inexperienced theological student would not then have been in danger of drawing erroneous conclusions, on some practical points of great importance.

It is therefore to guard the youthful reader from error as to the nature of practical Christianity, that the following reflections are offered, some of which will only go to explain what may be misapprehended in our Author's language and argument; others will attempt to suggest some additional thoughts on topics which may appear deficient. Some notice will then be taken of the easy adaptation of his argument to the practice and experience of religion in all its extent.

1. Let us first suggest a hint *on the na-*

ture and importance of Natural Religion as stated by Bishop Butler. Various mistakes have arisen, both as to what is meant by this term, and as to its efficacy, independently of Christianity. Nor have there been wanting those who have denied altogether its existence, and its subserviency to the Christian doctrine.

By Natural Religion Bishop Butler understands religion generally, as distinguished from those modifications of it which revelation superinduced. Natural Religion is that service, and those religious regards to Almighty God, which men owe to Him, as their Creator and Benefactor, and which arise out of the relations in which they stand to Him, as the rational and accountable beings whom he formed for his glory, and governs by his law. These primitive obligations may plainly be distinguished from Christianity, which is an additional dispensation, revealing the divine and stupendous scheme of the recovery of man from his state of ruin and guilt, by the Son and Spirit of God. Indeed Natural Religion is, properly speaking, distinct from those anticipations of the Christian redemp-

tion, which the early revelations to our first parents, to the patriarchs and to the Jewish people comprised. The traditions, it is true, of these early revelations, mingled with the faint traces of man's moral nature which have survived the fall, constitute the religion of nature, as now seen in the various heathen nations, where the bright light of the last revelation, the Christian, has not reached. But Butler, usually restrains the meaning of the term to the doctrine of a future state, where every one shall be rewarded or punished according to his deserts; and to those duties which man owes to God, as his moral and righteous Creator and Governor.

This religion was originally impressed on the heart of man, as 'created in righteousness and true holiness,' and consists of those habits and acts of subjection, obedience, reverence, love, adoration, gratitude, trust, prayer, communion, resignation, and praise, which an upright, but finite and dependent being, owed to its Sovereign and its Benefactor, and the reward consequent on which was to be eternal life. This divine impression on the heart was effaced by the fall; and now these habits

and affections are only to be acquired by the light and grace of Christianity. It is this revelation which has repaired the ruins of the fall, brought in a remedy for the apostacy and wickedness of mankind, restored the enfeebled, and almost extinguished powers of natural religion, added surprising discoveries of divine wisdom and mercy, in the sacrifice of the Son of God, and the mission of the Holy Spirit, enjoined important correspondent duties and obligations; and thus modified the original scheme of religion by these new characteristics.

It is therefore very fair for a Christian writer, like our Bishop, to distinguish, in his course of reasoning, the two series of habits and feelings; those which constitute religion as springing from our relation to God, as our heavenly Creator and Lord, and those which constitute religion, as springing from our relation to Christ, as our Meditator, and to the Holy Spirit as our Sanctifier, and to our heavenly Father, as being the Father of mercies, and the God of all consolation. It is thus the apostle Paul speaks of the Gentiles, which 'have not the law, being a law unto themselves, which show

the work of the law written in their hearts.' It is thus the same apostle expounds the chief truths to be learned from the law, to be 'God's eternal power and Godhead, which might be clearly seen by the things which were made;' and charges the heathens with 'not liking to retain God in their knowledge,' and with 'becoming fools, while professing themselves to be wise;' and, indeed, with committing, and glorying in those vices, and crimes, and passions, which 'they knew were, by the judgment of God, worthy of death.' The same apostle's argument at Athens, and his discourse to the Lycaonians, proceed on this supposition, that there was such a thing as the light and religion of nature, independently, not of revelation, in the first instance, but of the Christian, or last revelation by the Gospel.

Accordingly, in the present age, as well as in all preceding ones, the vestiges of natural conscience may be traced, however corrupted. Some notion of a Supreme Being, and of worship being due to him—some glimmerings of the doctrine of a future state—some idea of the efficacy of sacrifices—

some acknowledgment of the obligations of veracity and justice — some remains, in short, of a moral sense, are discovered, in greater or less force, amidst the scattered fragments of the pagan superstitions. There is every where in man, the capacity of being restored to all that Christianity designs and promises.

All this is clear and unembarrassed ground. The disputed territory lies beyond. For when we come to inquire, whether men, since the fall, ever discovered these natural truths originally, or regained them when lost, or acted upon them efficiently in their conduct, we have a host of assailants to contend with. And yet, surely, no doubt can be fairly said to rest on these questions. All experience declares, that natural religion, unless illuminated and guided by the light of Christianity, is impotent and helpless. All experience declares, that men, destitute of Christianity, grow worse and worse. No example has been ever produced, either of a pagan nation acting up to the scattered notices of religion which it possessed, or recovering the purity of it when once lost by the lapse of time, or the progress of vice. And the high proba-

bility is, setting aside, for the sake of argument, the testimony of Scripture, that the faint light which nature possesses, was an irradiation from the first revelation of God to man.

Butler is decidedly of opinion that this is the case. He says, 'As there is no hint or intimation in history, that this system (of natural religion) was first reasoned out; so there is express historical, or traditional evidence as ancient as history, that it was taught first by revelation.' He seems likewise, to hold strongly, that such faint traces of this original revelation as remain, aided by the fragments of man's moral nature, are so inefficient, from the want of essential parts, from the absence of authority and sanction, and from the intermixture of gross errors and idolatries, as rather to strengthen than curb, much less subdue, the passions and vices of mankind. Those relics of truth, therefore, being thus impotent of themselves, and being unaccompanied by any assurances of pardon, or any promises of grace and assistance, only demonstrate, in every age, and in every quarter of the world, by the state in which they

leave men, the indispensable necessity and infinite importance of Christianity.

On the whole, there appears no objection to the term Natural Religion in the sense explained. Whether any better, and more distinctive expression could have been devised to convey the idea of essential and primitive religion, as different from revealed and superinduced religion, is scarcely worth the inquiry. The use of the present term has prevailed; and it needs only to be employed aright, in order to stand free from just exception.

Natural religion, in subserviency to Christianity, is of great importance. It is everywhere taken for granted in Scripture, and confirmed and strengthened by the manner in which truth is addressed to man. All the evidences of revealed religion appeal to our moral nature, and meet precisely the faculty of judging which we still possess; and would have no medium of proof—and, therefore, no authority to convince—if this moral sense should be denied. Moreover, it becomes yet more important, in proportion as the light of Christianity, diffused around it, illuminates,

in some faint degree, its grosser darkness, and dispels its baser corruptions and superstitions. In Christian countries, men who reject Christianity insensibly repair the decayed and dilapidated temple of nature with the materials which it supplies. And it is with natural religion, in this form, that we have chiefly to treat in this country. It then serves to show men, that their consciences are bound, not only by the law of Christianity which they spurn and reject, but by the law of nature, of which they cannot divest themselves; not only by the infinite benefits and stupendous discoveries of the revelation of the Gospel, to which they ought to bow, but by the truths impressed originally on the nature of man, and sanctioned and enlarged in the primitive revelations of the Creator to him—revelations, of which every glimmering ray of knowledge, every feeble emotion of conscience, every remaining barrier between virtue and vice, every impression of the responsibility of man, every anticipation of future judgment, every relic and trace of an immortal and accountable spirit, are proofs and consequences. Thus men are reminded,

that they do not escape from moral government by rejecting Christianity, but fall back on a ruined and unaided principle, which leaves them just as responsible to God, the Creator and Judge, as before—only with the accumulated guilt of having spurned the only way of pardon and grace which the infinite mercy of God had provided for them.

The consideration of natural religion is also valuable, as it points out the grounds of those exhortations, warnings, reproofs, invitations, and commands which constitute so very large a proportion of the whole Scriptures, and on which revealed religion proceeds, and by which it works. The duty of man remains unaltered, notwithstanding his sinfulness and moral impotency; his capacity of receiving instruction, and being the subject of persuasion and alarm, remains the same, though he has fallen from his original rectitude; his guilt in rejecting the invitations of mercy, and the remonstrances of conscience, remain undiminished, though his power of complying with them must be sought for from above. Further, the use of all the means of grace as adapted to his reasonable

and moral nature — the exhibition and application of all the terrors of the law, and of all the grace of the Gospel, as the proper object of his affections, together with the earnestness and importunity with which these topics should be enforced — all rest on the plain footing, that some remains of feeling, and conscience, and light, rest with man, by which it pleases God to work in the dispensation of his Spirit.

Nor is the religion of nature less important, as fixing, in some measure, the ends, and guiding the course, of that which is revealed. All the chief abuses of the scheme of grace in the Gospel would be guarded against, if not excluded, if natural religion were allowed its subordinate influence. Such abuses spring from the desire, often laudable in its apparent object, of carrying the doctrines of the Gospel to their full measure, and applying them to the heart in their exuberant consolation. Hence men come first to deny natural religion — then to object to the practical exhortations of the Gospel; next to assert, that the state of death in trespasses and sins in which men lie, makes all precepts

contradictory, and all warnings fruitless; and, lastly, to spurn the authority and obligation of the moral law of God, and reject all the doctrines of Christian morals and Christian obedience. Thus an opening is made, insensibly, to the worst abuses of the Divine mercy and grace—abuses which a more implicit regard to the Scriptures, on the subject of the essential nature of religion, would have prevented. The end of Christianity is to make us holy—to bring us back to the purity from which we fell—to make natural religion practicable, possible, delightful; to infuse into it the humility which becomes a fallen condition—the faith in an atonement which the sacrifice of the cross demands—the gratitude and love which the benefits of that cross require—the dependence on the blessed Spirit which our feebleness makes indispensable—the joy which the hope of heaven warrants and bestows. Thus Christianity modifies, indeed, the essential religion first taught in the original revelation to man, and impressed on his heart; but never contradicts it—never swerves from the same end—never releases from its main obligations—never violates its primary

principles and dictates. Man is only bound more strongly, by all the benefits of Christianity to the obedience which he was, by nature, formed and designed to render to his God; and the moment he views those benefits in a manner to loosen, instead of confirming, the bonds of this obedience, he may conclude he is mistaking the whole end and object of the Christian revelation.

2. But this leads us to make an observation on *some of our great Author's expressions and sentiments, on the remains of Natural Religion, and on the grounds of our justification and acceptance with God, which seem open to exception.* For whilst we thus claim for natural religion, what the Scriptures clearly imply, or rather inculcate, and defend Butler on this point, we must cautiously avoid the dangerous error of attributing to it a power, which, in the fallen state of man, it does not and cannot possess, and which may militate against what the same Scriptures teach of the extent of man's depravity, and the necessity of divine grace, in order to his doing any thing spiritually good. And, therefore, the language which occurs in some parts

of the Analogy, on the nature and powers of man, may appear to be too strong, too general, too unqualified. We speak here with hesitation, because, considering the line of argument pursued by this most able writer, and the class of persons he addressed, it may be doubted whether this remark is applicable in fairness or not. Still we cannot but think, that he sometimes attributes too much to the unaided nature of man, allows too much to his moral sense and feeling, dwells too largely on his tendencies to virtue and goodness, and speaks too ambiguously on the ground of his justification before God. Such expressions as the following, considering the connexion in which they stand, are open to abuse: 'Moral nature given us by God'—'falling in with our natural apprehension and sense of things'—'There is nothing in the human mind contradictory to virtue'—'The moral law is interwoven in our nature'—'Men may curb their passions for temporal motives in as great a degree as piety commonly requires'—'Natural religion is the foundation and principal part of Christianity'—'Men's happiness and virtue are left to themselves,

are put in their own power'—'Religion requires nothing which men are not well able to perform'—'The relation in which we stand to God the Father, is made known to us by reason.' Such language continually occurring, together with the terms, 'virtue, vice, honest man, satisfaction of virtue, viciousness of the world,' &c. (instead of the scriptural terms, 'holiness, sin, renewed man, peace of conscience, corruption and wickedness of the world,') may have the tendency to exalt too highly the present fallen and corrupted powers of man, and prevent that deep and thorough humiliation which are necessary to a due appreciation and reception of the grace of the gospel. They tend also to lessen the guilt of man before God, and lower the standard of that holiness which the Christian doctrine requires and produces. Some most excellent observations and statements are indeed made, in the course of the work, on the mediation of Christ, and the influences of the Spirit, which go to correct the misapprehension to which I am referring; but these parts of the work bear but a small proportion to the whole treatise; whereas the expres-

sions in question occur perpetually, and in every variety of form, and under each division of the argument. They form the staple, and enter into the contexture, and give the colour, to the entire fabric. And thence arises the danger which we venture to point out. We do not dwell here on the fact, that this light of nature is in Christian countries reflected from Christianity, and is never found where Christianity is unknown. Nor do we stop to suggest, that natural religion, in its best and oldest times, confessed its weakness, and sought for help and aid. We are content to take things in their most favourable construction; and we still profess our conviction, that all language is reprehensible, which, by fair inference, leads men to think they can repent, and turn from sin to God, without his special and effectual grace. And in this view, we would caution the student against affixing too strong a sense to the expressions which we have cited.

In connexion with this remark, we must unequivocally declare our apprehension, that the language used by our Author, in speaking of the Almighty finally rendering to every

one according to his works, and establishing the entire rights of distributive justice, is open to objection. Perhaps, if taken alone, it might admit of a favourable interpretation; but, when joined with the overstatements already noticed, on the powers of man and the remains of natural religion, it becomes decidedly dangerous. The great doctrine of our justification before God, 'not by our own works and deservings, but only for the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ,' is too fundamental, and too important, to be undermined, even incidentally. We refer to such expressions as the following: 'The advantages of Christianity will be bestowed upon every one, in proportion to the degrees of his virtue'—'Divine goodness may be a disposition to make the good, the faithful, the honest man happy'—'We have scope and opportunities here, for that good and bad behaviour which God will reward and punish hereafter, —'Religion teaches us, that we are placed here, to qualify us, by the practice of virtue, for another state which is to follow it'—'Our repentance is accepted to eternal life.' These, and similar statements, occur throughout the

work. In the second part, where the leading features of revealed religion are delineated, they ought, by all means, to have been accompanied with those modifications which the superinduced scheme of the gospel, and the necessities of man, and the glory of the cross of Christ, and the ends of self-knowledge and humility require. We say they should have been accompanied by such modifications, because they are so accompanied in the Holy Scriptures. The doctrine, that 'every one shall receive the things done in the body,' that 'they that have done good shall rise to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation,' is most true, and most important. But the doctrines which accompany and modify this fundamental truth, should never be wholly lost sight of even in a treatise on Evidences, when any reference is made to the subject. We are taught in the New Testament, that these works must spring from faith and love to our Saviour Christ, and must be renounced in point of merit, on account of the inherent evil which defiles the very best of them, and must be accepted only

through that Sacrifice which is the real footing of a sinner's dealings with a holy God, and must be regarded by those who perform them, with that deep humility, and almost unconsciousness of having done them, which is so strongly marked in the conduct of the righteous, in our Lord's account of the last day. Now, these modifications are so essential, that the language of our author, however undesignedly, becomes really dangerous when stripped of them. And man is so prone to pride, self-confidence, reliance on his own merits, and presumptuous ignorance of his failings; and the Apostle Paul insists so warmly on the immense importance of the doctrine of justification without works, that too much caution cannot be used in the most incidental representations given on such subjects.

It is the more necessary to guard against a false reliance on our own works and deservings, because a mistake here pervades and corrupts every other part of religion. The good works of the pious Christian, whose mind is duly imbued with a becoming sense of his fall and corruption, of his unutterable

obligations to the great propitiation, and his entire dependence on the influences of the Holy Spirit, are very different from the partial, external, worldly, selfish, proud performances of the nominal professor of Christianity. The morality of the nominal Christian rises very little higher than that of the unbeliever; his rule is fashion; his limit, convenience; his aim, to do as little as possible in religion. He performs some actions, indeed, which agree, as to their form and external appearance, with the law of God; but, in truth, spring from habit, ambition, the love of reputation, the regard to society, the remonstrances of conscience. He soon fills up what he concludes to be intended by a pious and virtuous life. He soon attains to his own definition of a faithful honest man. He soon satisfies himself that his virtues surpass and overbalance his vices, and that, as he is to be judged according to his works, he has nothing to fear before the tribunal of Christ. In the mean time, his heart is alienated from God and true obedience to him; faith and love never visit his breast; and his religion consists with prejudice, perhaps hatred and

exasperation, against the real system of the gospel.

The truly devout Christian, on the contrary, aims at holiness, and not merely at what the world calls virtue; endeavours to subdue his passions, as well as regulate his conduct; labours to serve God, and adorn Christianity, and do good to others, to the very utmost of his power; spends much time and care in watching over his motives, and cultivating the inward principles of piety; devotes a portion of the day to the reading of the Scriptures, to the public and private calls of devotion, to self-examination, thanksgiving, and religious regards towards the ever-blessed God, and his Saviour and Redeemer, Christ. And after he has done all, he accounts himself an unprofitable servant, renounces all merit in his own works, attributes every good in them to the divine grace, and places all his trust in the vicarious sacrifice of the Son of God. He is the publican smiting on his breast, and saying, 'God be merciful to me a sinner;' whilst all other men, however pure in the eyes of the world, are, in fact, like the Pharisee, swollen with

conceit and arrogance, dwelling fondly on their own performances; looking, perhaps, with contempt on others, and placing no real trust in the mercy of God. Thus, even if all the separate expressions above adverted to, could be defended, yet would they still lead to a wrong end, because unattended with these explanations which the Scriptures carefully supply. We are to be 'judged according to our works,' and shall be rewarded or punished 'according to the deeds done in the body;' but in a high and transcendent sense in the case of the righteous, as their works spring from faith, are the effects of grace, and are accompanied with humility and self-renunciation.

3. These observations lead me to notice *a general defect, as it seems to me, in our Author's representation of the stupendous recovery of man provided in the Gospel.* For if any doubt could be raised on the inexpediency of the above language, all such doubt would be removed, when we find, on further examination, that our Bishop's allusions to the whole doctrine of redemption and salvation, as revealed in the New Testament, are

not sufficiently clear and comprehensive to agree fully with the Scriptural statements of our natural corruption, and of the operations of grace as adapted to it. Let us not be misunderstood. Bishop Butler is far from omitting altogether the peculiar scheme of the gospel. He states distinctly the insufficiency of repentance alone to restore us to God's favour. He speaks with admirable clearness on the Mediation and Sacrifice of Christ. He quotes the passages in Scripture, which teach the vicarious nature of Christ's sufferings, and insists on the benefit of those sufferings being something much beyond mere instruction or example. On these subjects, at least on some parts of them, no complaint can be alleged against his brief statements; they are luminous and adequate, for an elementary treatise. Still the general idea of the scheme of the gospel as a dispensation of grace, which would be gathered from the whole of his representations and suggestions, would be erroneous. He calls Christianity 'a moral system;' he speaks of it as teaching us chiefly 'new duties, and new relations in which we stand;' he de-

scribes it as 'an additional order of Providence.' These expressions are cold and inadequate. But we object most of all to the following passage: 'The doctrine of the gospel appears to be, not only that Christ taught the efficacy of repentance, but rendered it of the efficacy which it is, by what he did and suffered for us; that he obtained for us the benefit of having our repentance accepted unto eternal life; not only that he revealed to sinners, that they were in a capacity of salvation, and how they might obtain it; but moreover, that he put them into this capacity of salvation, by what he did and suffered for them; put us into a capacity of escaping future punishment, and obtaining future happiness. And it is our wisdom, thankfully to accept the benefit, by performing the conditions upon which it is offered, on our part, without disputing how it was procured on his.' (Part II. Chap. V. § vi.) Surely this is plainly deficient. Surely the salvation of Christ proceeds on a different footing, and includes much more than this. Surely the great Sacrifice of the cross not only obtained for the sincere believer, that his 'repentance

should be accepted to eternal life,' (a phrase unscriptural in its very terms,) not only put him in a capacity of salvation, not only proposed certain conditions to be performed on his part—all which places the stress of salvation upon ourselves, makes the reception and application of it to depend on our own efforts, and leaves to our Lord merely the office of removing external hindrances affording us some aid by his Spirit, and supplying deficiencies—but purchased also salvation itself, in all the amplitude of that mighty blessing; procured pardon, reconciliation, justification, adoption, acceptance, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the promise of everlasting life. Surely salvation brings men from darkness unto light, reverses the sentence of condemnation, and makes them 'the righteousness of God in Christ;' it places them under a new covenant, and confers the grace necessary for 'repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ;' it puts them on the footing, not of the law, but of the gospel, not of works, but of grace; not of obtaining acceptance for their repentance, but of receiving 'the gift of God, which is

eternal life.' Let Butler's summary of the benefits of Christ's death be compared with such summaries as the Apostle gives:—'We have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins'—'By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast; for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them.'

With this defective view of the fruits of our Lord's Propitiation, is allied a correspondent defect as to the nature and importance of faith, by which the benefits of that propitiation are received and applied. The tendency of some of Butler's summary statements, however undesigned, and arising perhaps, in some measure, from his coldness in pressing the particular course of his argument, is to lead the reader to suppose that the effects of Christ's redemption are enjoyed by all who profess the Christian religion, and live a moral life; that is, by all who have that general belief in the doctrine of Christianity, which springs from education

and rational conviction, if they are free from gross sin, cultivate virtue, and set a good example to others, by a decent reputable conduct. All these things are indeed included in the acts and fruits of a true and lively faith, but they reach not those peculiar effects and properties of it which prove it to be spiritual and salutary. Faith is 'the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.' It is a secret, cordial, holy exercise of the understanding and affections, in receiving God's testimony concerning Christ, and in reposing all the trust and confidence of the soul on the merits of that Saviour for everlasting life. It is not merely a general, cold, historical assent to certain truths; but a particular, affectionate, living, practical belief of them, on the authority of God, and an acting fully upon them, as infinitely good and important. It is not simply a notion, a creed, an established hereditary sentiment; but a holy principle, springing from a personal sense of our lost condition, and apprehending for ourselves the blessings of Christ, and relying upon them for everlasting salvation. Faith is the eye which looks

to Christ, as the brazen serpent which Moses raised; it is the foot which flies to Him, as the man-slayer fled to the city of refuge, that he might escape the avenger of blood; it is the hand which receives, as a needy beggar, the inestimable gift of God, freely offered to him; it is the ear which hears, with eager solicitude, the voice and invitation of mercy, that it may live; it is the appetite which 'hungers and thirsts' after Christ, and feeds on his flesh 'and drinks his blood,' that it may have eternal life. Faith, like Noah, prepares the ark, and enters it for rescue; faith builds on Christ the sure foundation; faith puts on Christ, as the robe of righteousness, and the garment of salvation. Accordingly, its effects correspond with its divine origin, and the matchless benefits it receives. It 'works by love,' it 'overcomes the world,' it 'sees Him who is invisible,' it 'glories in tribulation,' it 'purifies the heart,' it anticipates heaven, it 'quenches the fiery darts of the wicked one,' it produces uniform, spiritual, cheerful, willing obedience. Let any one read what the Scriptures assert of faith, what they ascribe to it, and the earnestness with

which they enforce its necessity, and he will be convinced, that it is totally different from that dead, speculative assent to the Christian scheme, which is often confounded with it. Faith includes, besides the general reception of Christianity, a particular conviction of our own sins, a particular apprehension of our own lost estate, a personal application for ourselves of the offered blessings of the gospel, and a distinct and spiritual reliance for our own salvation, on the death and merits of our Saviour Christ;—and some reference should have been made to all this by our Author; at least, no expression, however brief, should have been inconsistent with it.

4. All main defects in our views of practical Christianity hang together. *The same kind of inadequate statements, therefore, seem to us to be chargeable on our author's remarks on the doctrine of the Holy Ghost.* Indeed we are not sure if serious omissions are not to be found here—more serious than on most of the preceding topics. Bishop Butler allows indeed distinctly, that the Holy Spirit is our Sanctifier, and that the recovery of mankind is a scheme carried on by the

Son and Spirit of God. He speaks frequently of the aid which the Spirit, affords to good men. He acknowledges that man is a depraved creature, and wants not merely to be improved, but to be renewed; and he quotes the striking text, 'Except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' We would wish to give the full benefit of these admissions in favour of the Bishop, and against what we are about to state. Nor do we doubt, that this remarkable man implored the operations of the Spirit, in his own case; experienced his consolations, and ascribed every thing to his grace. Still we conceive, his general language in his Analogy, on this fundamental subject, does not come up to the Scriptural standard. He does not give even that prominence to it which he does to the mediation of Christ. He speaks of the Spirit as aiding, but scarcely at all, as creating anew; he describes his assistances, but hardly ever his mighty operations in changing the whole heart; he talks of his presence with good men, but seldom, if at all, of his regeneration and conversion of the wicked; he allows co-

operating, but not preventing grace—at least, not clearly and distinctly, as the Scriptures teach, and as the importance of the case requires; he dwells on the help of the Spirit, in subduing our passions, and qualifying us for heaven, but passes over slightly the illuminating influences of the Spirit, in opening the understanding, and his transforming power, in 'taking away the heart of stone, and giving an heart of flesh.' We read little or nothing in our author of the Holy Spirit's work in awakening men, like those asleep; quickening them, as those dead in sin; delivering them from the power of Satan, as those enslaved; convincing them of sin, as those ignorant and proud; creating in them a new and contrite heart, as those obdurate and perverse; and implanting in them the first seeds of repentance, faith, love, and obedience, as those needing a new and heavenly birth. All this is of the greatest importance, because, if the foundations of true obedience are not laid in the Scriptural doctrine of an entire renewal of the fallen heart, the subsequent building must be slight and insecure. If men are not taught the necessity of a new

creation in Christ Jesus, in consequence of the blindness of their understanding, as well as the disorder of their affections, they must, and will begin, and we find, in fact, they do begin, their religion in a proud, self-dependent temper; in ignorance of their own wants, and of the mighty change which must take place in them.

The illumination of the Spirit is especially important in this view. It is a doctrine humiliating, indeed, to the proud reason of man, but essential to any real knowledge of the Gospel of Christ. Our Lord places the gift of the Spirit at the very entrance of the Christian life, and directs men to pray for it, as the key and summary of all other blessings, 'Ask and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you. If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven, give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him?' It might have pleased God, for any thing we know, to have given us a revelation so framed as to be intelligible to us in all its parts, without further aid; or it might have pleased him

to have made the understanding of it, in all its parts, plainly above our powers of mind, and capacities of comprehension. In either case we should then have had no need of the illumination of the Spirit; in the first, because the revelation would have been wholly level to our natural powers; in the second, because it would have been wholly out of the reach of them. But it has pleased God to give us a revelation, containing much that is plain, in its history, its facts, its external duties, its sacraments, its morals; and much that is mysterious and incomprehensible, in its vast scheme, in the purpose and will of its divine Author, in the attributes and glory of the persons of the Godhead, in the miraculous conception and incarnation of our Lord, in the wonders of the cross, and the operations of grace. And, at the same time, much also that is of a mixed nature, being neither so plain as to be level to our unaided understanding, nor so elevated as to be wholly placed above their compass and capacity; but requiring the special guidance and illumination of the Holy Spirit, to be rightly apprehended and employed:—such is the ruined state of man,

the evil of sin, the nature of true conversion to God, of faith, of love, of peace, of joy, of communion with God, of new obedience; all, in short, that regards the application and use of truth. These things cannot be understood by man in his natural state, but must be learned by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. And thus the plan of Christianity is, in this view, a further test of men's characters. They must stoop at the very threshold, and sue for a heavenly light, and take other measures of sin, and themselves, and God, and repentance, and faith, and conversion, and obedience, than nature can give, or they will fatally err. The ignorance and prejudices of the 'evil heart of unbelief,' will infallibly betray them. Either no sense will be put on the parts of the Scripture, relating to these subjects, or a forced, low, insufficient sense which evades, and explains away, instead of implicitly receiving, the real meaning. Not that we claim an illumination of the Spirit which supersedes at all the use of the human faculties in studying the Bible, or requires a new sense to be put on ordinary language and construction, or communicates new truths,

not already revealed in the written word of God; or encourages or warrants enthusiasm and human fancies; or intrenches on the miraculous powers conferred on the apostles; or alters the rule of duty, and the obligations of man to obey it; or acts in a way of force and compulsion inconsistent with our reasonable and accountable nature. What we maintain, is the necessity of the secret and imperceptible influence of the Holy Spirit upon the understanding, sought by diligent prayer, and communicated gradually, in the use of rational means; by which the mind is freed from prejudice and aversion against truth, and is opened to receive the instructions of the written word of God, in their full and natural signification and use.

But we pause. This is not the place to enter on a discussion of the work of the Holy Ghost in man's sanctification. We have said enough, if we have convinced the theological student that the impression which Butler gives of this subject is far too slight and superficial. Let it be well remembered, that God has given us a revelation of his will, with the additional promise of his Spirit, to

make it effectual to its high purposes. The light of heaven is not more necessary to our discernment of natural objects and beauties, than the light of the Spirit to our discernment of spiritual objects and fitnesses. The characteristic of the New Dispensation, is the promise of the Spirit. And with this persuasion, we cannot dissemble our fears, that the language of Bishop Butler may lead to dangerous mistakes.

5. *But, in truth, all these deficiencies, if we are right in our judgment about them, spring from an inadequate view of the fallen state of man.* We know the controversies on this mysterious subject. We allow that statements have too often been made, which go to annihilate man's moral nature, and his capacity of restoration; which weaken his responsibility and unnerve the exhortations and invitations which the Scriptures address to him; which extinguish the faint light of natural conscience, and repress effort and watchfulness. But we cannot but know, at the same time, that the errors on the side of extenuating and lessening the Scriptural account of man's spiritual state since the fall,

are equally dangerous, and more prevalent. We cannot therefore conceal our conviction, that Butler's view of human depravity does not fully meet the truth of the case, as delineated in the inspired writings, and confirmed by uniform experience. He speaks, we allow, occasionally of men 'having corrupted their natures,' having lost their 'original rectitude,' and as having permitted 'their passions to become excessive by repeated violations of their inward constitution.' He avows that mankind is in 'a state of degradation, however difficult it may be to account for it; and that the crime of our first parents was the occasion of our being placed in a more disadvantageous condition.' Yet, notwithstanding these expressions, the sincerity and importance of which, so far as they go, we do not for a moment call in question, he dwells, in the course of his work, so copiously on man's powers and capacities—on his 'favouring virtue'—on his 'having within him the principle of amendment'—on 'its being in his own power to take the path of life'—on 'virtue being agreeable to his nature'—on 'vice never being chosen for its

own sake;' that we cannot but consider the result as dangerous. If these expressions were qualified, as they are in Scripture, by other and explanatory statements, the danger would be less; but standing as they do, they convey the idea, that man is not that inconsistent, weak, corrupt, perverse, depraved, impotent creature which the Word of God teaches us he is. The consequence of slight impressions of this great truth infallibly is, that men, not being duly instructed in their real state before God, cannot feel that humility, nor exercise that penitence, nor sue for that renewal, which all depend on the primary fact of a total moral ruin; and which form the adaptation between the real grace of the Gospel, and the actual wants of man. Thus all the great ends of Christianity are missed, and inferior benefits only are derived from it. Neither conversion on the one hand, nor real obedience to God on the other, can be attained; and the arch, deprived of its keystone, as it were, loses both its beauty and its strength.

The scriptural account of man is, that 'he is born in sin and shapen in iniquity'—that

'in him dwelleth no good thing'—that 'his heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked'—that 'the very imaginations of the thoughts of his heart are only evil continually'—that 'he cannot, of himself, think any thing that is good'—that 'he is dead in trespasses and sins'—that 'he is by nature a child of wrath,'—lost, enslaved, miserable, ignorant, corrupt;—his heart 'at enmity with God'—his passions and affections set on 'divers lusts and pleasures'—his whole moral nature 'alienated from the life of God.' This strong language is not contradictory to what the Scriptures, from which it is taken, teach of man's responsibility—his remaining sense of right and wrong—his conscience—his fears of judgment—his duty and his obligations; but it plainly instructs us, that these relics and fragments of a former rectitude, are relics and fragments, and nothing more; and that as to any effective love of holiness—as to any real return to God—as to any positive efforts to recover or restore himself, he can do nothing, except as God 'worketh in him to will and to do of his good pleasure.' The edifice is decayed throughout; it must

be taken down and re-erected by the Divine Architect. The leprosy has infected every part; it must be levelled with the ground and built anew. Let this fundamental doctrine be understood, and produce its due effects, and all will be easy and intelligible in the Christian scheme of redemption; every thing will occupy its due place. The apostacy and fall of man will prepare for salvation by grace—for a free justification by the merits of Christ—for an entire renovation by the blessed Spirit—for a sincere and unreserved obedience. And not only for obedience, but for love to God and man—cheerful dedication to the service of Christ—a temper of compassion and kindness towards others—a distinterested, amiable, and active benevolence—a zeal for the glory of God, and the good of men, and a watchfulness over the first risings of sinful passions and appetites. All this will be connected with a 'peace of God which passeth understanding'—'joy in the Holy Ghost'—'patience in tribulation'—delight in prayer, meditation, and the contemplation of God and heaven—a sense of happiness and tranquillity, in spi-

ritual things — a moderation as to all earthly concerns, and a victory over the applause and frown of the world.

6. For this is the next thing we shall presume to mention, as defective in the allusions and statements of our Author,— *his standard of the effects of Christianity, in the holy, happy lives of real Christians, is far too low.* It could not indeed be otherwise. The spiritual life is a whole. If the glory of the Saviour, and the operations of his Spirit, and the total ruin of man, as requiring both, are not first understood, it is impossible that the blessed fruits of all this, in the new life and happiness of the renovated, pardoned, and sanctified heart, should be produced. There is, however, such a thing as 'the love of Christ constraining a man to live no longer to himself, but to Him that died for him and rose again;' there is such a thing as the inward experience of the grace of Christianity— there is such a thing as a holy, happy, spiritual life, which differs as much from a merely rational and moral one, as the rational life differs from the animal, and the animal from the vegetable. Not to have seized this idea, is

to have missed one peculiar feature of true Christianity.

7. In short, the whole of what we would advance amounts to this, *the standard of Christianity, as applied to the heart and life of man, which the readers of Butler would form from his general language, is far below what we conceive to be the standard of the Sacred Scriptures.* In our view of the scriptural standard, we may be wrong; but we think every reader will perceive that the several points on which we have offered remarks, hang together. If the view we take of the extent of the fall be in the main correct, then the view of justification, of the grace of the Gospel, of faith, of the work of the Holy Ghost, of the peace and consolation of the Christian's heart, and of the zeal and spirituality of his obedience, are probably correct also. They are links of one chain. The connection is indispensable. They rise or fall together.—All we entreat of the reader, is an impartial examination of the entire question. We beg only that it may not be determined by matters irrelevant—by fashion, prejudice, the spirit of party, temporal and

subordinate interests. We beg only that the introduction of tenets which we do not hold, or of consequences which we abhor, may not be mixed up with the discussion. The simple question is, Is the system which the language we have been condemning seems to favor, or the system which we have suggested in its stead, the true system of the New Testament? Which comes nearest to the Bible? Which has the apparent sanction of the inspired oracles of God? Which suits the expressions and sentiments of the sacred writers in all their parts? Which takes in naturally and without effort, not only the historical parts of the Bible, not only the moral, not only the prophetical, not only the devotional—for there is here no dispute—but the doctrinal and experimental? It is no sufficient proof of the truth of the system we are opposing, that parts of it agree with the Scriptures; for it could not be otherwise. It would not be a convincing proof of it, even if the whole of its detached parts were to be found separately in that perfect code. The question is, does it take in ALL that Scripture teaches, on the several subjects; does

it adopt in their obvious and unadulterated meaning, ALL the language and statements of the Bible on the fall of man, on justification, and on the other points in controversy? And here we boldly and fearlessly appeal to facts. Those who preach and write in the temper and on the scheme which we are opposing, do not use naturally and habitually the language of St. Paul and the other Apostles. This language does not suit and fall in with their system, does not express what they mean; and, therefore, except when compelled by circumstances, their theological scheme avoids the Scriptural phraseology, and is formed in a different school. Our objection to Bishop Butler's language, is, that it is not Scriptural. He substitutes weaker and more ambiguous expressions. He lowers every thing. This one point goes far to decide the question with any candid mind. The system which admits with ease, and reposes upon, the very language and sentiments of the inspired writers in all their instructions and exhortations, must, in all probability, be the nearest to the truth. It is thus men judge in every similar case. And it is to be

remember, that the higher and more spiritual system of Christianity, takes in and embraces the lower one; whilst this lower one rises not to the other, and thus reaches not the extent and end of the Divine Revelation.

Again, we appeal to the hearts and consciences, to the trials and conflicts, to the feelings and wants of the most devout and sincere Christians, and we ask which view of truth comes nearest to their cases, their necessities, their indigence? Which view of the state of man is best descriptive of their own state? Which view of the scheme of pardon most adequately supplies their importunate need? Which view of the doctrines of the Holy Ghost affords the mighty aid which they are conscious they require? Which view of the grace of Christianity corresponds most exactly with their extreme misery? Which view of the spiritual obedience and love of the Christian life is most closely allied to the object at which they aim? But we will not press these questions. The confessions of the very best and most holy men, are the liveliest comment on the language of the divine writers. And the misgivings and peni-

tential acknowledgments, as death and eternity approach, of many, who during life, espoused the lower interpretation, speak loudly enough on this subject.

We rather go on to ask this question—Which system of divinity produces in the largest measure those fruits and effects, which are ascribed to the Gospel in the New Testament? Now it will be conceded on all hands, that 'by their fruits we are to know' the true teachers, and distinguish them from the false. Does, then, the lowering doctrines of modern times on the fall and ruin of man, and the redemption and grace of Christ, and the kindred topics, awaken the souls of sinners, reclaim the ungodly, arouse the careless, revive religion where it has decayed, and preserve it where it flourishes? Does it not, on the contrary, first leave those who preach it cold and inactive, and then fall without efficacy on the ears of the hearers? Does it not prove insufficient for converting the heart, turning it from the power of sin, and raising it to the love and obedience of God? Does it not fail of comforting the afflicted conscience, and inspiring a hope of

heaven? Does it not stop short of all the mighty ends which primitive Christianity produced? And is there not a constant tendency in it to deteriorate and sink lower and lower, till the grace of the gospel is almost excluded, and little remains beyond a tame morality and an external form of religion? And does not the decay of spiritual religion go on, till, by the mercy of God, a revival of the great doctrines of salvation by grace in the plain language and spirit of the Scriptures, takes place, and recalls man to the true standard of faith and practice?

The fact plainly is, as these inquiries are designed to describe it. On the contrary, the simple preaching of 'Christ crucified,' is still the 'power of God and the wisdom of God.' Wherever the high standard of really evangelical truth is raised, and the Saviour is preached to a lost world, and the regenerating and sanctifying operations of the Spirit are avowed, and the full consolation and joy of faith expounded, and the elevated rule of Christian morals sustained; there, under whatever incidental defects or disadvantages, the effects of conversion, love, and obedience

are copiously produced; man is indeed turned from sin unto God, the breast of the rebel is subdued and softened, his whole character is changed, and the seal of God is impressed upon the declaration of his own truth, by the displays of his own efficient grace and mercy.

It strongly confirms the conclusion we thus come to, to consider that the Universal Church of Christ has held these great truths which are now so much opposed. Look to the early Fathers of the Church, and you find the doctrines of man's total apostacy, and his salvation by grace only, to be the life of all their instructions. As those mighty truths were corrupted by human philosophy, or overwhelmed by superstition, the power of religion sunk, her glory in the conversion of men was lost, and she fell back into a cold controversial spirit, which brought on the ages of darkness and spiritual tyranny. What, we ask, was the doctrine of Cyprian in the third century, of Ambrose in the fourth, and Augustine in the fifth? What gave life to their exhortations, and influence to their labours? Was it not the pure evangelical light, which, notwithstanding many subordinate er-

rors and much superstition, shone forth in their laborious discourses and writings? Even to the time of Bernard, the last of the Fathers, the name and grace of Christ in the full efficacy of his mercy, pervaded the theology, and sanctified the hearts of them. It was only as this healing doctrine was utterly lost under the accumulation of superstition and idolatry, that the melancholy desertion and apostacy of the visible Church in the West, took place. In the midst of this thick darkness, however, it was the same truth of grace which preserved, among the Albigenses and Waldenses, the life and influence of the Gospel. And at the Reformation, what was it which Luther, and Melancthon, and Cranmer, and Zuingle, and Calvin, and Beza, and Knox taught? Did they not revive the old Scriptural doctrines of original sin, justification by faith, salvation by grace, regeneration and communion with God by the Holy Spirit, and spiritual obedience, as the fruit of all this in the temper and life? Some of these truths, indeed, were held in a general and loose manner by the church of Rome, but they were enervated by distinctions and re-

finements, and overwhelmed by superstitious usages and rites. The reformers boldly appealed from the erroneous opinions of men, to the infallible word of God. They set forth the ruin of the fall in all its extent, they insisted on the preventing grace of the Spirit, as necessary to all true repentance, they gloried only in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in justification by his merits; they called men off from works of external mortification and unauthorized penance, to the good deeds, and virtuous habits, and divine principles taught by the sacred writers. And what was the effect? In most of the nations of Europe, thousands and thousands were really converted to the service and love of God. The reformed doctrines spread with the rapidity of lightning; a pure form of Christianity was established in many states, and the Papacy was shaken to its base.

Let any one impartially read the Confessions and Articles of the Reformed churches, and those of our own church amongst the very first; and he will see that the high standard of sentiment and practice which we espouse, was universally maintained. What is

the language of these noble documents? Does it resemble the enfeebled and dubious strain of modern theology; or does it not rather take the plain and strong ground of the ancient doctrine of the entire apostacy of man, and the efficacious grace of God? And in all the Protestant churches since the Reformation, mark the progress or decline of real piety and holiness, and you will find them uniformly to bear a relation to the pure doctrines of grace upheld or denied. Where these doctrines have flourished, the presence and mercy of God in the conversion of men has attested the truth: where a decay has taken place, and human morals, or a low system of divinity, has usurped the place of the unadulterated gospel, every thing has fallen in proportion—men have remained dead and unmoved in their sins; the form has extinguished the power of godliness; cold and proud pretensions to orthodoxy have been united with a worldly life; the clergy have deserted the lofty function of being heralds of salvation and examples to their people, and have been lost in secular politics, in human attachments to an established creed,

and angry controversies with those who point out to them 'a more excellent way.' Thus things have grown worse and worse, till God has granted a revival, by the secret guidance of his Spirit. Then the old and forgotten tenets of human guilt and impotency, and divine mercy and power, have been raised up again as from the grave, the old standard of truth again erected; public opinion has been gradually changed; the former state of decline admitted and deplored; and the wonted efficacy of Christian doctrine seen once more, in its proper fruits of conversion, holiness, and love.

But we are indulging ourselves in reflections which carry us too far from our immediate design. The Analogy is a Treatise of Evidences, and could only be expected to allude generally to these momentous topics. We would not assume the truth of the evengelical system of which we speak. We invite only to inquiry; we appeal boldly to every kind of testimony which such a case admits; and we leave the result with confidence to the judgment of every unbiassed and enlightened theological student. One

reason of our venturing to dwell on these topics is the well-fixed persuasion, that our writers on Evidences have grievously mistaken their own duty as advocates of Christianity, as well as the interests of truth and religion generally, in not presenting the fair and adequate account of the doctrines and morals of the Gospel. We do not mean that they should involve themselves in controversy, nor even enter on the details of Christian doctrines and morals. Let them keep to their own province, the defence and establishment of Christianity generally; but let the references to the contents and tenor of that religion be, so far as they go, just and complete. Let the little they do say, be accurate. Let what is given to their readers convey an idea of what the spirit and design of the whole system is. Let the parts touched on, connect naturally with all the rest which are not specifically treated. This conduct becomes the magnitude and importance of the subject. It prepares the reader of evidences to submit to the yoke of Christ. It exhibits religion attractive, efficacious, entire. It meets the feelings and wants of the

sincere and humble inquirer. It shuts out a thousand misapprehensions and errors. It insures the blessing of God in a larger measure, upon the triumphant evidences of our faith. It is the most simple, upright, straight forward course.*

Still we are far, very far from undervaluing the labours of the Apologists and Defenders of Christianity. They have performed excellent service. Their acuteness and skill, their penetrating observation, their indefatigable researches, the force of their reasonings, and the depth of their knowledge, have deserved highly of the sacred cause. The External Evidences have naturally been most adequately unfolded, because the interior virtues and properties of the Christian scheme came less within their scope. But we adhere, notwithstanding, to our conviction, that all the summaries of the revealed doctrines, which even the argument from external evi-

* We cannot here withhold our tribute of admiration from the work of Mr. Sumner on the 'Evidence of Christianity, as derived from its reception, and from the nature of its doctrine.' This masterly treatise forms an era in the history of writings in defence of our faith.

dences require, should be a part and parcel, as it were, of the entire possession, should resemble the apostolic examples, and be expressed as nearly as possible in the apostolic language. We do not stop to say how much more this should be the case in Treatises on the Internal Evidences. We rather go on to observe, that in the case immediately before us, the argument from Analogy, a similar fidelity to the full demands of the Christian scheme, would have had the very best effect. That we do not depreciate the talents and labours of Bishop Butler, must have been obvious to every reader of these pages. We have even expressed the hope, the rational hope, springing from a judgment of charity, that in his own mind he followed the true doctrine, and that he was far from intending to produce those consequences to which his language may lead. We have also fully admitted his correct and powerful defence of the scheme of Christianity to a certain extent. It is this very thing which makes us the more regret, that he had not carried his views on, and given a more full and accurate idea, so far as his plan of argu-

ment allowed, of all the efficacy and consolation of the gospel. His work is cold. He seems rather like a man forced to be a Christian, than one rejoicing in its blessings. It is impossible to calculate the additional good which the Analogy would have effected, if its unnumbered readers had been instructed more adequately by it in the spiritual death and ruin of man in all his powers by the fall, in the inestimable constitution of special grace established by the gospel, in the gratuitous justification of the sincere believer in the sacrifice of Christ, in the divine nature and properties of true faith, in the mighty operations of the Holy Ghost in illuminating and sanctifying man, and in the consolation and universal obedience which are the fruits of faith. Probably there is no student in divinity, during the last half century or more, who has not read, and read with admiration and profit, this astonishing work. How many of these have been confirmed in a defective theology, strengthened in prejudices against truth, and persuaded to adopt a low system of doctrine in the instruction of others, from the incidental language, and hazardous ex-

pressions which occur in it! But so it is. There are in human life few things complete. What we meet with in one writer, we miss in another. The union of rare and exquisite talent with the highest tone of sacred feeling and doctrine, was perhaps rarely ever witnessed as it was in PASCAL. And the good which his masterly work, though posthumous, and the writing of a Roman Catholic, has produced, has been correspondent both in extent and in quality. The unexampled effects of his 'Thoughts on Religion,' attest the solidity of the main points to which we are now adverting. Pascal surpasses all other writers on Evidences, because he conjoins the most lively and acute genius, and the finest powers of reasoning, with the full admission of the great fundamental tenets of the Christianity which he defends. The single doctrine of the entire corruption of man by the fall, sheds a light on all his arguments, and meets the state and feelings of every pious reader, whilst it tends to instruct those who are as yet unacquainted with this most important truth. It is thus that Pascal's great work, though not free from many of the errors of his church,

remains unrivalled in its class. And the work of Bishop Butler would have been little inferior to it, if it had united, with its profound and just views of the order of God in his natural government, and the correspondence of his moral and religious order in revelation, the full view of human depravity and of divine grace, which that revelation opened before him. It is impossible not to see with what ease a writer who has proceeded so far, and conducted us so securely to a certain point, would have gone on in the course he was pursuing, till he had embraced the vast compass of experimental and practical religion, and had thus left behind him a monument, not only of triumph over objections against the general scheme of Christianity, but of victory over those prejudices, and that tame acquiescence which too often obscure the real doctrine of our recovery, as we have ventured to delineate it.

8. For this is the last topic on which we shall presume to offer any remarks. We observe, therefore, that *the very same arguments from the analogy of nature which silence the objections raised against Christianity, as*

expounded by our author in a very mitigated sense, would have served to meet the objections raised against it, in its full Scriptural extent.

1. For instance, the doctrine of the fall of our nature might have been defended in its genuine form, quite as triumphantly as it now is. The following is the conclusion of Butler's argument :—'Whoever considers all these, and some other obvious things, will think he has little reason to object against the Scripture account, that mankind is in a state of degradation; against this being the fact, how difficult soever he may think it to account for, or even to form a distinct conception of the occasion and circumstances of it. But that the crime of our first parents was the occasion of our being placed in a more disadvantageous condition, is a thing throughout, and particularly analogous to what we see in the daily course of natural Providence.' Part II. c. v. sec. 5. Surely, if the expressions used by the inspired writers were substituted for the defective ones of this passage, the argument would hold equally good. Nay, it would have more force, from more exactly corresponding with the facts of the case.

For men, alas! are not merely in 'a state of degradation' but of alienation from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts;' mankind were not only 'placed in a more disadvantageous condition by the crime of our first parents,' but 'by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned;' as the inspired apostle declares.

II. Again, the argument of our author, from our confessed ignorance of what a revelation might be expected to contain, and of what particular offices and duties might be assigned to a Divine Mediator, is just as valid when applied to the true view of the mediatorial grace of Christ, as we conceive it to be revealed in Scripture (always supposing we are right in that view) as to the limited view to which he actually applies it. The hope which the order of Providence suggests of the moral consequences of sin being in some way remedied under God's government, remains as it does. The inefficacy of mere repentance and reformation, as apparent from the course of natural things, remains as it

does. The intervention of Christ as the great Mediator, by his one vicarious propitiation and atonement, remains as it does. If, then, the effects of this mighty sacrifice are not merely the 'procuring our repentance to be accepted, and the putting us in a capacity of salvation,' but the actual gift of pardon, justification, and a title to eternal life, by faith only—the inference is as firm, and the analogy as clear, as in the present case. The reasoning is even more close, if the facts, as we contend they do—that is, the real state of man, the positive benefits received by the sincere believer, and the decisive testimony of Scripture on the subject—bear us out.

III. Nor can we discern any gap in the argument, concerning faith being the instrument of receiving Jesus Christ as the greatest gift of God—if faith be interpreted in that higher and transcendent sense in which we have put it. The reasoning stands just as it does. Only at present it applies to a general indiscriminate belief in the truths of revelation; and, in the case as we would propose it, it would embrace a particular, personal, holy, affectionate obedience of the

heart to the testimony of God to his Son, and to life in Him. If objections are invalid or frivolous against the first, much more must they be so against the second.

IV. In like manner, the admirable reasoning of our author, from the clear and particular analogy of nature, that a moral government is going on in the world, and will be completed in a future life—a government in which every one shall be punished or rewarded according to his works—loses no part of its force, if the grace of God, and the fruits of faith flowing from it, are included in the notion of the deeds of the righteous to which the reward of endless life shall be assigned. All depends on the primary question, What is the real doctrine of Scripture on the point? Assuming this, which we are obliged to do for the sake of argument, we must say, we can see no different, or stronger objections against a moral and righteous government under the Christian dispensation being now carrying on, if the true view of the character, and works, and piety, and humility, and other attendant virtues of the believer in Christ be taken into the account of his general good

deeds, than if the historical faith, and feeble penitence, and defective motives, and partial morality of the external Christian be mainly regarded. On the contrary, the argument gains incomparably in strength and exactness, if the Scriptural hypothesis be adhered to.

v. Again, the full doctrine of the operations of the Holy Ghost, in the sense we have given to it, is just as reconcilable with all we see in the order of nature and just as free from any valid objections, as that aid and assistance to good men is, to which our author chiefly restricts it. It is no more contrary to any conceptions or expectations we might have formed of Christianity, to find in it a provision for restoring our corrupted nature by an effective renewal, than to aid it only by less supplies of light, and strength, and consolation. The mystery of the Spirit's operations is the same in both cases—the danger of enthusiastic pretensions the same—the manner of recovering man by the revelation of a Divine Sanctifier, the same—the obligations we owe to the Holy Spirit, in the relation he stands in to us, the same. We mean the same in kind—open to no other

objections; proceeding on the same sort of scheme. Indeed Butler actually uses, at times, as we have had occasion to state, the strongest language that could be required, and quotes once the expression of our Saviour, 'Except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven.' He needed only to have pursued out these admissions, and incorporated them into his digest of the Christian code, in order to have discharged the entire measure of his duty of a theological instructer.

VI. The observations also, excellently acute as they are, which Butler makes on the system of means working to various high ends, and on the moral discipline and probation which the state of things in this world constitutes to the Christian, would retain all their fitness, and would conclude as strongly, if the spiritual nature of real obedience and love to God, and of the peace and consolation inspired, as we conceive, by the Gospel, had been in his view, as they do now. The force of habits, the progress men make from one degree of character, and one capacity of excellence to another—the discipline arising

from the wickedness of the world, and the trials to which piety and virtue are exposed —the attainment of states of mind, and measures of knowledge and goodness by these means, which could scarcely have been conceived of in the first stages of the progress —the preparation for future happiness and security thus gradually made—the influence of our present trials on our future condition, in a way of natural consequence—these, and many other of our author's finest remarks will stand, whichever system of morals and consolation we adopt. They apply, however, with double propriety, if we retain the higher standard of love, obedience, self-denial, watchfulness, and peace. Their force is thus augmented. The occasions for them are more striking; whilst the difficulties remain for substance the same.

VII. The only plausible objection which we can suppose to be offered to the view of the Christian scheme, as a scheme of grace is, that it presents the Almighty as unequal in the distribution of his gifts. For, undoubtedly, if the real corruption and disorder of mankind by the fall be what we have stated—

if the remaining powers of natural religion be so feeble and inefficient — if the operations of the Holy Ghost be so mighty and distinguishing — if the blessings flowing from the mediation and sacrifice of Christ be so exuberant —if, finally, the standard of Christian love and holiness be so high — then it follows that man does not, in fact, begin with God in the application and reception of the blessings of Christ, but God begins with man; then it follows, that salvation is wholly of grace, and not of human effort and choice in any degree: and thus we arrive at the necessary confession, that there is, in the Gospel, a special gift and collation of effectual grace, previous to any saving effects being derived from the death of Christ. And this confession we scruple not to make. There is such a thing as the special and effectual grace of God. We do ascribe to Almighty God all the will and the power which we have to do any thing that is good. We do acknowledge, that not only the means of salvation in the sacrifice of Christ, are of God; that not only the offers of salvation in the doctrine of the Gospel are of God; but that also the grace

to accept these offers—the grace which illuminates, and persuades, and converts, and sanctifies, and consoles—is of God. A mystery this, which we attempt not to fathom; but the practical use of which we may clearly discern. For, as this doctrine is never so stated as to lessen the responsibility of man, supersede the use of means, weaken the duty of every one who hears the gospel, to repent and obey it; or excuse, in the slightest measure, the guilt of impenitence and disobedience; so it manifestly tends to deep humility of mind under a sense of our helplessness and misery; to entire renunciation of our own presumptuous and unaided efforts, and to simple dependence on the influences of grace, to enable us to comply with the calls of the Gospel as addressed to us. That is, it puts us in the attitude of suppliants. It makes our feelings correspond with our real situation. It guards us against false refuges, and directs us to the true one. And it teaches us to ascribe the glory of all we do, where alone it is becoming, to the gracious will and mercy of our compassionate God and Father.

And surely the objection raised against this inequality of the Divine gifts, may be moderated at least, and silenced, by the very same arguments which our author so solidly employs on similar subjects. We obviously see, in the order of natural Providence, this inequality; that is, some men have advantages, opportunities, instructions, means of attaining benefits, endowments of mind and body, facilities in their moral trial and probation, which others have not. The diversity of cases is infinite. The general laws by which they are produced, are to us unknown. The speculative difficulties of comprehending the scheme of things in which they are found, are insuperable. Still things are as they are; and all thoughts of harshness and severity are excluded by recollecting, that every one shall be judged at last by an infinitely gracious Creator, who will not require of any, more than what was committed to his trust. 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right,' is the question applicable to the more profound mystery involved in the Scriptural account of our salvation, as well as to the ordinary irregularities of the gifts of Pro-

vidence, as defended by our author. We cannot reasonably expect the same measure of information concerning God's proceedings, as concerning our own duty. The reasons of the collation of grace are with God; the duty of seeking that grace, on the assured promise that we shall obtain it, is with us. The inequalities in the Divine gifts is a secret of the Almighty; the improvement and right use of the abundant measure of these gifts which we severally possess, is the obvious province of man. If the statement of the Christian scheme, which we are defending, be scriptural, the argument from analogy moderates and silences all objections which are made against it, to every fair and considerate mind. We say moderates and silences them; for it does not undertake to answer them. The case, for any thing we know, admits not of a satisfactory explanation to finite creatures like us, at least in the very small part of it as yet revealed.

VIII. Nay, further, if the profound and incomprehensible subject of the Divine prescience and predestination should be considered as springing from the topic which we

have just been noticing, as it undoubtedly does in one form or other, and as the articles of the Reformed Churches explicitly make it to do; the very same arguments which Butler employs to guard against the fatal consequences deduced from the doctrine of philosophical necessity, are applicable to any dangerous consequences which might be drawn from it. The Scriptural doctrine of predestination (without determining, too minutely, what that doctrine is, for which this is not the place) no more excludes or weakens deliberation on our part, choice, the use of means, the acting from certain principles to certain ends, than the opinion of necessity does. If the argument of analogy, from the facts of God's natural providence and government, silences the difficulties or abuses, call them which you please, which spring from the scheme of necessity; much more does it silence the difficulties which are sometimes linked on the doctrine of predestination — a doctrine, on all interpretations of it, essentially milder and more intelligible than necessity, and resting on totally different principles. If, for example, a child who should be edu-

cated by a Necessarian to imagine that he was not a subject of praise or blame, because he could not act otherwise than he did, is refuted by matter of fact, by the inconveniences he brings on himself and occasions others; and is thus taught by experience, that his applying this scheme of necessity to practice and common life, is reasoning inconclusively from his principles, even supposing them to be true; how much more ought the man who should deduce the like pernicious inferences from the doctrine of predestination, to consider himself as refuted by matter of fact, and be taught that he reasoned inconclusively in applying his principles to common life? For the Divine predestination, as revealed in the Scriptures, is not a blind fate, or necessity; but the prescience and foreordination of events, according to the infinite wisdom, goodness, mercy, and power of the Sovereign Lord and Father of all. The truth is, that on either scheme the application of the rule of the divine will, to our duties in life, is false, dangerous, and contrary to the whole analogy of God's government over us, as reasonable and accountable beings. On

either scheme, or notwithstanding either scheme, it remains, as our author well observes, a fixed and fundamental truth, that 'God will finally, and upon the whole, in his eternal government, render his creatures happy or miserable, by some means or other, as they behave well or ill.'

IX. The practical difficulties which still remain, and which must remain, on these and similar points, are, lastly, capable of being entirely relieved or silenced, by carrying on the admirable arguments of the bishop on the ignorance of man, and the incomprehensibility of the vast scheme of the divine government to him, in his present state. Christianity is obviously a plan only partially, very partially revealed. We see but a small part of God's ways in his natural providence, and we see still less of them in his supernatural and stupendous revelation of grace. The very things which we think irregularities and defects, may, for ought we know, be instances of surprising goodness and wisdom. The relations of each circumstance which now puzzles us, may stretch beyond us infinitely, and be connected with events, past, present and future,

in an endless series. The difficulties which press upon religion, arise chiefly from our presumption in wishing to understand and reconcile God's acts and will; not from our inability to discern the path of our own duty. Our obligations are clearly set before us; it is the divine government and purposes which are not clear to us. And surely the deplorable and pitiable ignorance in which we find ourselves, as to the order of things in the natural world, may reconcile us to the consequences of the same ignorance, as to the order of things in religion. It is one chief act of faith, thus to bow before the majesty of God; and it is one distinct test of humility, to be willing so to do. They offend equally against both these Christian graces, who, on the one hand, deny or explain away the divine prescience and fore-ordination, under the notion of preserving man's free-agency and responsibility; or who, on the other, weaken or undermine man's reasonable and accountable nature, on the plea of magnifying the grace of God. They offend equally against faith and humility, who either wholly conceal the mysteries of religion, with the

view of preventing the abuse of them, or who obtrude and overstate them, on the pretence of discharging the calls of gratitude, and abating the confidence of man. The depth of human ignorance should be ever impressed on our minds, when we advance a step, either in maintaining or impugning any doctrines which relate peculiarly to the ever-blessed God. The rule of Scripture—its terms, its spirit; the proportion in which different truths are stated, the bearings and relations of them to each other; the consequences deduced from them; the manner in which they represent man; and the character and attributes which they ascribe to almighty God, should all be scrupulously adhered to. Our ignorance enjoins this implicit submission. And in this temper the scheme of Christianity, as we conceive of it, is open to no more difficulties than the scheme of it, as stated by Bishop Butler. The argument from analogy covers either. And the only question that fairly remains, is, which approaches the nearest to the Holy Scriptures? And on this question we cannot think any doubt would long harass a candid mind, if

prejudice and prepossession were laid aside, and the study of the human heart, and prayer for divine illumination, were connected with the examination of the Sacred Volume.

But it is time for us to draw to a close this too much extended Essay. We are far from flattering ourselves that we shall succeed in persuading our readers, generally of the truth of all we have advanced. In the first division of the Essay, indeed, we can anticipate but one opinion. The admiration of the genius of Butler is a national sentiment; and if we have at all succeeded in expressing, in a shorter compass, his main arguments, we shall not be thought to have written unnecessarily, at least for the young. On the connexion, also, of the argument from analogy with the other branches of the Christian evidence, we hope we have advanced nothing which will be thought open to controversy. It is in the latter part of the Essay where we express our difference of opinion from our great author, on the scheme and bearing of Christianity, that we must expect opponents. The case cannot be otherwise. Indeed, fair and manly discussion in the temper which Chris-

tianity inspires, is far from being unfriendly to the interests of truth. A calm and unmeaning acquiescence is much more so. Torpor precedes death. We are exhorted to 'contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints;' and this exhortation implies material differences of judgment amongst professed Christians. Let me only earnestly recommend that charity on questions really doubtful, and that zeal and fervour on points of fundamental import, which the whole tendency of the work, which we have been endeavouring to illustrate, strongly enforces. We are placed in this world in a mysterious and progressive state of things. Darkness and ignorance hang over much of our path. Charity is therefore our peculiar duty in such circumstances. Even the truths most directly practical and fundamental, touch on others which are less clearly revealed. To attain uniformity of opinion on all subordinate points, is a hopeless pursuit. The education of different men, their prejudices, their various talents and advantages—the party-spirit, the unfavourable habits, and the defective measures of religious attainments which are found

amongst them—the mere ambiguity of language will constantly occasion a diversity, a great diversity of judgments. The only healing measures in the midst of these disorders, is the spirit of love—love which rejoices to hope the best of others, which interprets favourably doubtful matters, which seeks the real welfare and happiness of all—love which bears and forbears, which reconciles and softens, which unites and binds together, which consoles and blesses the hearts where it reigns. It is by this divine principle that we shall most dispose persons of various sentiments to act in concert with us. It is this which neutralizes and disarms opposition. It is this which tends both to lessen the amount of our differences, and to take away almost all the evil of those which remain. Persons who cannot altogether think alike, may join in mutual love and good-will—may act as one in points out of controversy—may grant cheerfully the freedom of judgment which they themselves require—may aim at narrowing, instead of extending and widening the grounds of separation; and may believe others to be guided by a similar conviction

with themselves. It is surprising how rapidly controversies would die away, if this course were pursued! The questions on which real Christians substantially agree, are infinitely more important to them, and more clear in themselves, than those on which they differ. Let us then reserve our zeal and fervour for these uncontested matters. They demand all our concern—all our time—all our care. It is the magnifying of other points, beyond all reason, and beyond Scripture, which has occasioned the divisions in the church. Let it be one effect of the study of Bishop Butler, to moderate our opinion of our own knowledge and attainments, and to direct our efforts and zeal into their only safe channel. Humility is the proper effect of reading such an author. We shall thus present the fairer face of Christianity to such as doubt of its truth. The eloquence of a consistent, benevolent temper and life is never without its effect. If, indeed, Christianity is robbed of its characteristic glories, and its doctrines and morals are gradually reduced to the standard of a corrupt world, there is nothing left to contend about. No charity can hope

well of such a religion. But when the peculiar truths of revelation are sincerely retained, and the main doctrines and duties flowing from the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ and the influences of his Spirit, are insisted on, then it is that the correspondent temper and behaviour are naturally required, and become so incomparably important. The most formidable objection against religion, practically speaking, is the defective conduct of those who profess it. The light of a holy example shines around. The infidel must be at times struck with the contrast between the obvious benevolence and friendliness, the self-denial and activity of the true Christian, and the selfishness, pride, and indolence of a worldly person. The amiableness and usefulness of the one, is in deep contrast with the repulsive and self-indulgent tone of the other. The effect of this contrast is unavoidable. The infidel and sceptic know the human passions too well, not to estimate in some measure what must be the force of the principles which can overcome them. In this peaceful victory of holiness and truth let us persevere. The acknowledged excellence

of our conduct will add incomparably to the evidences which we gather from Butler, or other writers, when we are called on to state them in argument. The spirit of love will dispose an adversary to listen to a calm defence of our faith. All arrogance—all airs of superiority—all harshness of manner—all over-statements will be banished from our friendly and affectionate efforts, and the path of truth be smoothed and rendered inviting. Indeed all the stupendous doctrines of Christianity are designed to form us to that temper of gratitude to God, and of benevolence to man, from which the conduct we are recommending immediately flows. And it is one main recommendation of those doctrines, in their simple and native vigour, as we have endeavoured to state them, that they, and they only, produce the uniform Christian temper. Without this seal and confirmation of the truth, all our reasonings, however conclusive, will fail of convincing. With it, the weakest and most defective statement of the grounds of our faith, will often succeed. Religion is not so much a matter of intellectual effort, as of the obedience of the heart and

affections. Christianity, in all its discoveries, and duties, and promises, is so adapted to the state and wants of man, that it can only be rejected when there is an inward aversion to goodness. The form of argument which that aversion may assume, has been sufficiently refuted a thousand times. The last resources of it are cut off by the process of analogical reasoning so admirably adopted by Butler. Let this alienation of mind be overcome, and man falls prostrate in adoration at the foot of the cross. The doctrines of the Gospel suit and meet his feelings and necessities. The evidences of it are admitted to have their true force. The fruits of holiness and consolation soon begin to appear; and these fruits in the convert to the faith, being in harmony with the same effects in the temper and spirit of his instructer, attest the identity of religion, and increase in both of them the happy assurance that they have found the supreme good of man—the real spring of truth and felicity—the undoubted revelation of the divine will—the exuberant source of pardon, peace, and holiness—the most amazing discovery of the mercy and grace of God—the

correspondent parts of that vast scheme which is impressed with the same features in the works of nature and of grace, and which are the pledge and guide to the eternal rest and joy of heaven.

The Albany Y. M. C. A. Participates
In the Berkeley Community Chest

SEP -1 1934

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: August 2005

PreservationTechnologies
A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION
111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 012 059 301 8